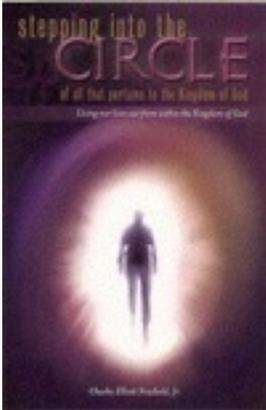


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## **Stepping into the Circle of all that pertains to the Kingdom of God**

**Living our lives out from within the Kingdom of God**

**Charles E. Newbold, Jr.**

I pray for all who read these books that God may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened; that you may know the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward you as a believer.

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Published by Ingathering Press  
P.O. Box 31795  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37930  
USA

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Printed in the United States of America

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## ***PREFACE***

Many of us today are experiencing a transition that is taking place in us and among us. We are moving from a membership in the kingdoms-of-men mentality to a citizenship in the Kingdom-of-God mentality; from living in bondage to the world system to living vibrantly in the Kingdom of God. We are being taken out of her (the institutional church system and the world systems) and are being established into Him (Jesus Christ). This book intends to hold up a few signposts along that path to help us know where this journey is taking us.

I use the pronoun “we” throughout this writing on the assumption that you have been drawn to read this because you are among those who will see, enter, and inherit the Kingdom of God in fullness in order that, through us, the Kingdom of God will be fully manifested on the earth as it is in Heaven: the pending end of this present age.

## CHAPTER 1 - THE AHA! — THE CIRCLE

A few people were invited into our home to hear Brother Sam share the incredible stories of God's miracles, signs, and wonders in him, through him, and through others that he had personally witnessed.

He told how he was miraculously spared from a tragic death while still in his mother's womb,

How he was healed from stuttering speech and twisted legs,

How a bright light appeared to him in a dream and a voice told him, "This is my way and Jesus is my Son,"

How God orchestrated his conversion experience while in a land foreign to his homeland,

How he had to count the cost of endangerment to his life from his Muslim relationships,

How God used him to raise a woman from the dead, heal a blind girl, heal a deaf and dumb boy, and related several other miraculous acts, including how God physically caused him to grow four inches as an adult in answer to prayer.

Sam told how his father trapped him into returning home that he might coerce him into renouncing Jesus. When Sam refused, his father imprisoned him in his own home and attempted to kill him. He told how two angels miraculously escorted his escape.

Numerous other stories were told, leading up to how God miraculously made the way for him to launch The Bible Channel that reaches millions of people with the gospel all over the world.

As he told his stories, I suddenly had a revelation. An Aha! I jumped to my feet and addressed my visitors seated around the room, gesturing with my forefinger to an imaginary circle on the floor.

"Imagine if you can that inside of this circle is all that pertains to the Kingdom of God. Outside of that circle is all that pertains to the world in which we live. It is the natural, physical world of fallen men and corrupt systems. God has not called us to live outside the circle and reach in, but to live our lives *out* from *within* that circle."

Following that day, I continued to receive more understanding and clarity regarding the difference between the world we live in and the Kingdom of God.

All that pertains to the world is on the outside of that circle. Everything that pertains to the Kingdom of God is within that circle.

Most Christians live on the outside of that circle in the world rather than from within the Kingdom of God. We have been standing in the world and, at best, reaching over into the realm of the Kingdom of God in the hope of making our worldly lives more comfortable.

We ask God for this or that. We pray for healing. We pray for help. We pray for jobs. We pray for well-being. We pray for protection. We pray for peace. We pray for blessings. We pray for finances. We pray for things like that. We stand outside and ask God to do these things for us.

We may be interested enough at times to want to know His will in our lives and pray for that, but we rarely take the time with Him to find out what that might be.

Perhaps this is why, more often than not, we do not see the answers to those prayers and we wonder why. We ask God to bless our flesh and our own wills. This level of Christian living is so minimal. In fact, it misses the mark.

We now find ourselves hungering for more than this. There has to be more than this and, thankfully, we are finding there is.

The Kingdom of God presents a whole different reality in which we can live. The outcome of such a life is radically different.

Once we begin to really see the Kingdom of God, the cares of this world will grow strangely dim and we will be better able to enter in. We desperately need eyes to see and ears to hear.

The New Testament speaks of three ways we initially relate to the Kingdom of God.

### 1. We can see the Kingdom.

“Jesus answered and said unto him [Nicodemus], ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.’” John 3:3.

“But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God.” Luke 9:27.

### 2. We can *enter* the Kingdom.

“Jesus answered, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot *enter* into the Kingdom of God.’” John 3:5.

“Verily I say unto you, ‘Except you are converted, and become as little children, you shall not *enter* into the kingdom of heaven.’” Matt. 18:3.

For additional study read: Matthew 5:20; 7:21; 19:23-24; Mark 9:47; 10:23-25; Luke 18:17, 24-25; and Acts 14:22.

### 3. We can *inherit* the Kingdom.

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of my Father, *inherit* the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” Matt. 25:34.

There are numerous scriptures that list those individuals who will not inherit the Kingdom. For additional study read: 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 15:50; Galatians 5:21; and Ephesians 5:5.

I think these three—seeing, entering, and inheriting—occur in the order listed. We have to see it before we can enter it. We have to enter it before we can inherit it. Yet, in some mysterious way, the very instant we see it, we enter it. The very instant we enter it, we inherit it.

The goal of our inheritance is to reign and rule with Christ in His Kingdom. For now, we are taking the land little by little until one day suddenly we will have come into the fullness and glory of the Kingdom. We will be perfected. “And [He] has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” Rev. 5:10.

In addition to seeing, we are to receive the Kingdom of God if we are to enter it. “Verily I say unto you, ‘Whosoever shall not *receive* the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.’” Mark 10:15.

It is my prayer that this writing will arouse within you the deep desire to “love not the world,” rather to “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matt. 6:33.

Moreover, may this writing open the way for you to move from being focused on the world to truly seeing, entering, and inheriting the Kingdom of God.

It can happen! It must happen! It will happen because our Lord has appointed for many of His sons to be brought to glory.

## CHAPTER 2 - ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD

We can better understand the Kingdom of God as we contrast it to the world which is hostile toward God and His Kingdom.

As our understanding of this difference between the world and the Kingdom of God increases, the more we will be able to see the Kingdom and, hopefully, our walk will be far more unshakable.

The word “world” is used in different contexts in the scriptures. One refers to the planet on which we live. Another refers to the world population—the present abode of mankind as opposed to heaven or hell. The third refers to the fallen nature of man and societies in a global environment. This third use of the word “world” is the one in reference here.

### ***All that is in the world***

The things outside of that Kingdom of God circle pertain to all that is in the world, things that are not of the Father—“the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” 1 John 2:16.

Jesus named a number of defiling things that come out of the heart. These are evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies. Matt. 15:19. Paul adds to the list in Galatians 5:19-21: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance [conflicts], emulations [imitations], wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things *shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*” Add to the above such things as lying, cheating, stealing, coveting, deception, death, sorrow, fear, terror, doubt, disbelief, condemnation, disappointment, depression, curses, greed, hatred, anger, revenge, lust, and pride.

The more subtle aspirations peculiar to being in the world are ambition for fame, fortune, prestige, position, recognition, power, and self-glory.

Life conditions peculiar to being in the world are such things as sickness, diseases, hunger, and poverty.

Social conditions peculiar to being in the world are isolation, rejection, prejudice, intolerance, and bigotry.

World conditions peculiar to being in the world are war, famine, and terror.

Many things are good in the world—things that are neutral and harmless and even beneficial, but are still in the world—friendship, companionship, hard work, charity, family vacation, love, laughter, cooking, eating, discipline, exercise, sports, and reading. God can be in these kinds of things when they pertain to the Kingdom of God, but just because they are good does not make them of God. It is said, “God is good, but not all good is God.”

Whether on the evil side or the good side they are all in and of the world. They are all deeds of the flesh. They are all fruit from the same tree.

## **Two trees**

Remember those two trees in the garden, Genesis 2—the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life? The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was forbidden; nevertheless, its fruit was appealing.

The forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden is representative of the world and all the things in the world. It seems like it would be a good thing to know good from evil, but to embrace good and evil is at the expense of having Life.

The Tree of Life is representative of Jesus who, as the Son of God, is Life. He possesses the very Life of God. To be in and of the world is death, devoid of the true Life of God.

We observe, then, that this forbidden tree that represents the world has both good and evil aspects to it. There are things in the world that are good, but are not Life. They are still rooted in self-life. Whatever has its source in the carnal (fleshly) mind of man is of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Whatever has its source in God is of the Tree of Life.

## **Satan's domain**

Adam was given dominion over all the earth, the birds of the air, the animals, and the plant life. He abdicated that authority to Satan when he yielded to Satan's temptation.

Jesus acknowledged Satan's rule and authority in the world. While in the wilderness, Satan, likewise, tempted Jesus except this time, unlike the first Adam, Jesus did not yield. Notice the third temptation by Satan. The devil took Jesus upon a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. He told Jesus he would give Him all these things if He would fall down and worship him. Matt. 4:8-9. The devil could not have offered Him any of this if it were not his domain to give. Jesus did not contest his right of dominion.

We can confidently say that the fallen world order is under the power of the prince of the air who is Satan. Eph. 2:2. He is the god of this world. 2 Cor. 4:4. He is the ruler of the demons. Matt. 9:34.

The good news is that Jesus regained dominion from Satan through His death on the cross. Paul writes, "And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Col. 2:15.

## **Love not the world**

James strongly exhorted, "You adulterers and adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James 4:4.

John clearly exhorted us "not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2: 15.

The word used by John for *love* in the Greek is from *agape*. *Agape is the unconditional, sacrificial giving of oneself for what is in the best interest of another without expecting anything in return*—giving of ourselves to someone other than ourselves. Jesus defined and demonstrated *agape* in the sacrificial giving of His own life on the cross for the remission of our sins that we might be saved. He died that we might live.

It is interesting that we can love the world in such a way. Translated according to this definition of *agape*, the verse from 1 John could just as well read, "Do not sacrifice yourself to the world nor to the

things in the world.” In other words, do not live in the world. Do not live worldly. Do not sell your soul to the world in order to gain the world. “For what is man profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Matt. 16:26.

“Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God...Do you not know that to whom you yield yourselves as servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Rom. 6:13, 16.

We cannot have it both ways. We cannot give ourselves to the world and to the Father at the same time. If we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us.

After all, loving the world is in opposition to loving God. To love God is to give ourselves over to God that He might live His life through us. To love the world is to give ourselves over to the world that the world might live through us. The irony is this: giving ourselves to the world is in reality living our lives for ourselves—living only to satisfy our own needs and wants without caring about others, to achieve at the expense of others if necessary.

### ***Living for Self***

All that is of the world has to do with living for SELF. We simply cannot fully grasp what it means to be of the world apart from an understanding of Self; that is, our egocentric, self-absorbed, self-obsessed, self-seeking, self-serving, vain and narcissistic personalities—*looking out for number one*.

Most people live self-absorbed lives. They live to satisfy the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. We were all born that way as fallen beings. An ego-centered life is satanic, fleshly, and destructive. Self, self-centeredness, self-help, self-indulgence, and self-actualization are the kinds of mentalities that power the world order.

I would dare to say that all of the tensions in the world ranging from wars between nations to embattled marriages stem from egomaniacal self-centeredness—“what’s in it for me?” “What are you going to do for me?” “You owe me.” Greed! Self-centeredness is the source of most divisions among fellowships of believers.

The issue of Self and self-centeredness strikes at the very heart of the gospel. It is in opposition to the gospel. The more we as believers understand that we are to live our lives for Jesus Christ, the more victorious our lives will be.

### ***Living for Jesus***

Jesus said, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Matt. 16:24. The cross we are to take up daily is this business of denying self. How do we do that? Of what are we denying ourselves? To put it simply: We cannot follow Jesus and maintain our own course in life. They are diametrically opposed. When we come to Jesus, we are no longer our own. We have been bought with a price. 1 Cor. 6:19-20. We belong to Him. We are surrendered to Him and to His will. The Greek word for *deny* means “to affirm that one has no acquaintance or connection with someone; to forget one’s self, lose sight of one’s self and one’s own interests.” This definition of “deny” is akin to agape.

God certainly plans goodness toward us. He certainly has not only given us the promise of eternal life, but abundant life in the here and now. Even in the throes of temptations, trials, persecutions, and tribulations, we have “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” That peace will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phil. 4:7.

Nevertheless, we no longer desire to live our lives, but desire for Him to live His life in us and through us. We are crucified with Christ; nevertheless, we live. Yet, it is not we who live, but Christ lives in us. Gal. 2:20. *Our plans, our ambitions, our hopes and dreams are put on the altar of sacrifice.*

Consider what Jesus told those who said they wanted to follow after Him. Here are three scenarios in Luke 9:57-62.

“It came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said to Him, ‘Lord, I will follow you wherever you go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head.’

“He said unto another, ‘Follow Me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their dead: but you go and preach the Kingdom of God.’

“Another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow You; but let me first go bid them farewell who are at home at my house.’ Jesus said to him, ‘No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.’”

Jesus solemnly answered, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.” Mark 8:35. The Greek word for *life* used here is in reference to our soul-life. It has to do with our personality—our wills, minds, and emotions.

We can no longer follow our own agendas and follow Jesus at the same time, unless of course His agenda becomes ours.

### ***Overcoming the world***

James admonishes us to stay unstained by the world. James 1:27b. Paul admonishes us to “deny the desires of the world.” Titus 2:12. Moreover, we are not to be conformed to the world. Rom. 12:2. Rather, we are to be crucified (dead) to the world. Gal. 6:14. We are to overcome the world, John 16:33; 1 John 5:4-5 because we have been chosen out of the world. John 15:19.

Paul wrote Timothy saying, “No man serving as a soldier entangles himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who has chosen him to be a soldier.” 2 Tim. 2:4.

While we are not to be of the world, the promise remains that we may very well face persecution in the world. Jesus said to His followers, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.” Joh. 16:33.

## CHAPTER 3 - THE SYSTEMS OF THE WORLD

Of major importance to understanding the world is to see how it functions as a system. The world is a system with a multitude of subsystems.

Systems are essentially neutral, being neither good nor bad in and of themselves. They are just systems. For example, the human body is a beautiful interdependent network of systems. Likewise, the universe is a highly ordered system of matter and space. We could not exist in our earthly life without these systems. Everything we do engages us in some pattern or system, even as simple a task as putting dinner on the table.

Therefore, a distinction is to be made between functional systems and “world” systems as they pertain to the fallen world order described in chapter one. Systems generally serve purposes for good, especially in their beginning.

Observably then, the system is not the problem; rather, what we make of them.

### **Collective solutions**

I wrote in the first chapter how all that is in the world has to do with living for Self. We find that Self is the energy that turns the cogs of world systems.

Living for Self and according to self-strength leads to failure and the fear of failure. Thus, we have to generate collective solutions to our problems, needs, and wants in life. As a result, multilayered systems have evolved over the ages such as political and governmental systems, educational systems, health care systems, welfare systems, economic systems, and religious systems. Every operation in the world is reduced to a system of one kind or another. Mankind initiates these systems.

These are often composed of systems within systems. All of these systems combine to form the world system; that is to say, the systems of the world as a whole operate as one gigantic system. In some cases, these systems conflict with one another.

These systems emerge into institutions and industries that take on a life of their own. They emerge as entities that become greater than the people who instituted them.

Nevertheless, these systems are *in* the world and *of* the world in which we live. We become so dependent upon them that we empower them to do for us what we fail to believe God can do and has promised to do.

### **Idolatrous**

The problem with these systems as stated at the beginning of this chapter is what we make of them. We have made idols of them.

*World systems become idols to us when we look to them for our sufficiency; thereby, authorizing and empowering Satan and his hierarchy to take dominion over them.*

They are then given over to his authority and administration. It is amazing just how much faith we invest into these systems.

## **Fear**

We often become bound to (dependent upon) these systems because of fear. We are afraid not to take out insurance to cover every aspect of our lives. We are afraid not to go to the doctor with every little pain. We are afraid the government is not going to provide for us when we are no longer able to earn wages for ourselves. We can know these systems are idols by how angry we get when they are taken away or when they cease to perform for us. All the things we fear expose a lack of faith in God.

We can use the systems, but we need not allow the systems to use us. We cannot escape being in the world and being subjected to the world's systems, but we do not have to be of the world. We want to always live our lives, knowing that Jesus Christ is our sufficiency in all things.

There is a life to be lived in this body of flesh that does not have its source in the world but in the Kingdom of God. *We are to move from standing in the world from where we occasionally reach over into the Kingdom of God to garner something out of it, to standing inside of the circle and living our lives out from within that source.* The more we practice this, the more this world and the things in the world "will grow strangely dim."

We are transitioning from dependence upon the systems of the world to abiding in the Kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER 4 - PERCEPTION DECEPTION

Before writing this chapter, the words *perception deception* kept coursing through my mind. I knew it had something to do with the world and our perceptions of it. I sensed that our perceptions of the world and the value we put on living in the world were based in deception.

### ***The Matrix***

Then, I revisited a movie titled *The Matrix* and lifted this dialogue between Morpheus and Neo. The secular world sometimes amazes us with how it can stumble upon a truth, and we then see how God will in turn use that truth to send a message to those who care to hear.

In the movie, there is a simulated reality where humans are grown in pods and are connected by cybernetic implants to an artificial reality called the Matrix, which keeps their minds under control while the (human-like) machines use the bioelectricity and thermal energy of [human] bodies as an energy source<sup>1</sup>. In the first movie of this trilogy, Morpheus explains the matrix to Neo. Despite all of the fantasy in the movie, the following quote nails it down.

“Let me tell you why you are here,” Morpheus begins his explanation to Neo. “You are here because you know something. What you know you can’t explain, but you feel it. You felt it your entire life...that there is something wrong with the world. You don’t know what it is, but it’s there. It is like a splinter in your mind driving you mad. It is this feeling that has brought you to me. Do you know what I am talking about?”

Neo questions, “The matrix?”

“Do you want to know what it is?”

Neo nods, “yes.”

Morpheus explains, “The matrix is everywhere. It is all around us. Even now in this very room. You can see it when you look out your window, or when you turn on your television. You can feel it when you go to work...when you go to church...when you pay your taxes. It is the wool that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.”

Neo asks, “What truth?”

“That you are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else you were born into bondage. Born into a prison that you cannot smell, or taste, or touch—a prison for your mind. Unfortunately, no one can be told what the matrix is. You have to see it for yourself.”

All the systems of the world are like this matrix. They give us a false sense of life, of what is really true and of value, of what is worth living for.

### ***Revelation of the Kingdom of God***

These things can only be seen and understood by the Holy Spirit and not by the mind. It will take a revelation of the Kingdom of God to expose this deception. The more we see the reality of the Kingdom of God the more we will see the deception of the world. I pray we all see this revelation.

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<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia. *The Matrix*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Matrix](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Matrix) (as of Apr 2, 2011).

Jesus came preaching and teaching about the Kingdom of God. Whatever else one might make of what He said, one thing is certain. He was interested in changing people's perception of reality. Mostly, He was attacking the conventional reality of His day regarding religion. He pointed to the Pharisees and said in so many words, "Hear what they say and see what they do? They say one thing and do another. That is not it! Do what they say, but don't do what they do." The Pharisees believed what they said to be truth, and most of the people assumed that what the Pharisees taught and practiced was the truth even though their religion was very difficult to practice. It was much easier to talk it than to walk it.

On the other hand, Jesus announced, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life..." That would sound very arrogant to anyone hearing this. It would seem arrogant to us today if one came among us and said that he was the Truth with a capital T. It is one thing to say, I know the truth, but quite another to claim that I am the Truth. Yet, that is exactly what Jesus did. The difference is that He was able by the power of God to demonstrate that claim through signs, wonders, and miracles, and ultimately by His resurrection from the dead.

Jesus was revealing that the people of His day had a perception issue. What they perceived to be truth was not truth.

Examples are found in Matthew 5:21-39:

"You have heard that it was said of old time [under the letter of the Law], You shall not kill...but I say to you [in the Spirit of the Law], that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, You fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

He taught, "You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not commit adultery, but I say to you, That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Continuing on, He taught, "Again, you have heard that it has been said by them of old time, You shall not swear yourself, but shall perform to the Lord your oaths, but I say to you, swear not at all..."

Again He said, "You have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say to you...turn the other *cheek*..."

You have heard and believed one thing, but I say unto you....

Jesus had a deeper perception of the Law than they. He did not abolish the Law. He did not say it was irrelevant. He merely interpreted it in light of the truth. Jesus was the truth; therefore, the Law has to be interpreted and perceived in light of Him.

### ***Polar opposites***

A Kingdom of God perspective is a polar opposite to the world perspective. We rarely have this radical view of the Kingdom, especially when we are babes in Christ, but Jesus means for us to have it. We should at least expect to grow into such maturity. Granted, a lot of dying to self and to the stuff of this world has to take place after we are born again and filled with His Holy Spirit before we can come to see this difference.

Once we really do see by revelation this difference between the world and the Kingdom of God, I mean really see it, we should no longer care about the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the house we live in, the furniture we have, the car we drive, the friends we have or wish we had, whether we are in front of the line, or who wins or loses the game. Even on a grander scale, we cannot care if the stock market

soars or falls. We stand looking upon these things from afar. Rather, we want to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher (perfecter) of our faith.

We are blessed when we have these provisions, but we never forget that they come from the One who is our provider. We do not put our trust in them. We do not live our lives to attain them. We know that our heavenly Father knows what we need and provides accordingly. As with Paul the apostle, we are content in whatsoever state we find ourselves. Phil. 4:11-12.

Men have always had perception issues. The world mindset today places great value on power, position, reputation, fame, recognition, wealth, beauty, and success. The focus is on ME, and what the world owes ME. These are at war with the principles of the Kingdom of God. And that is why it is so needful to have our *perceptions corrected*. Things really are not always as they seem.

As we move from a world perception to a Kingdom perception, we will undergo a *perception transformation*. As we go through the *perception transformation*, we come to a *perception correction*. Once we come to that correction, our worldview and our Kingdom of God view will have radically changed. This change of perception will result in a radical change in how we live our lives.

### ***Perception transformation***

In the process of entering into the Kingdom, we devalue the perceptions of the world and increase our value of the things of the Kingdom. Our love affair for the things of the world wanes and our delight in the things of the Kingdom increases. Since those things of the Kingdom have to do with Jesus' life and being, it gives meaning to what John the Baptist said, "He must increase but I must decrease." John 3:30.

Mankind has always had perception issues. It began in the garden with the first man and woman over the fruit on a certain tree. God told them the truth. Satan told them a lie. They believed the lie. We are prone to believe the lie. That is why it is so needful to have our *perceptions transformed*.

Jesus, looking on from His Kingdom perspective, has a different opinion about things than we naturally do. When at the wedding in Cana, the people looked at the water and saw the water. Jesus looked at the water and saw the wine. John 2:1-11.

When He was moved by compassion to feed the five thousand, His disciples saw five loaves and two fish in the little boy's lunch box. Jesus looked at the fish and loaves and saw a banquet sufficient to feed them all. Matt. 14:13-21.

Mary and Martha considered the stinking corpse of their brother Lazarus who had been dead for four days. Jesus came and saw him resurrected. John 11:1-44.

The Pharisees saw the wealth of the man with the diamond ring. Jesus saw the wealth in the widow's mite. Mark 12:42-44.

When Peter and John passed through the Temple Gate called Beautiful, others may have noticed the lame man begging. Peter and John saw Him walking. Acts 3:1-6.

People typically want to slap the cheek of another for the evil done to them, but Jesus said, "Turn the other cheek." "Love those who persecute you...." Matt. 5:44.

He always had a different perception of people and things. We will have a transformation of our own perception when we begin to see things from Jesus' point of view.

### ***Eternal perspective***

An eternal, heavenly, Kingdom of God perspective is needed to correct our temporal, worldly, and kingdom of men perception deceptions. We need to step into the circle of all that pertains to the Kingdom of God and begin to see things from God's point of view. His is the correct one. If any one of us has a perspective different from God's, it is a deception.

## CHAPTER 5 - STEPPING INSIDE THE CIRCLE

For many years the Kingdom of God was a mystery to me. I would read the parables and note that Jesus said they were not to be understood by those who were outside of the Kingdom. Mark 4:11.

After all, the Kingdom of God is a mystery to the natural man. It is even foolish to him. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can teach the things of the Spirit. He teaches Spirit to spirit, not spirit to the natural mind of man. Therefore, the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit: “for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Cor. 2:14. (Also, vs. 11-13.)

There I was. I could not reconcile the above passage in my own mind. I believed in Jesus with all my heart and thought I was “spiritual,” yet I did not get the point of many of the parables. I would hear what others thought the parables meant and think, “Well, that may be right, but it still isn’t insight to me.”

Then, it occurred to me that I was the one making a big mystery of the Kingdom of God. That is why I could not see it. It was a mystery to me because I was looking for something mysterious. The mystery of it all, however, is in its simplicity. It was there all along—in plain view. It is there in the Bible from beginning to end. It is revealed in the life, words, and works of Jesus and of His original followers. It is all there in these writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, and Jude.

On several occasions, I asked my audience to name things that characterized the world as they understood it. I randomly wrote these on a flip chart around the outside of the circle. Together, we listed such things as: *evil, darkness, sin, sickness, death, rebellion, occult, bondage, sorrow, fear, doubt, disbelief, curses, hatred, murder, lies, deception, manipulation, control, witchcraft, lusts of the eyes, lust of the flesh, the pride of life, religion*, and various human endeavors.

Then, we randomly listed inside the circle a few of the multitude of characteristics that pertain to the Kingdom of God, characteristics that can be lifted straight out of the New Testament. Among them were: *life, Holy Spirit, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, power, health and healing, faith, light, deliverance, miracles, signs and wonders, fruit of the spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control—justification, redemption, sanctification, glorification, mercy, forgiveness, gifts of the Spirit, ministries of the Spirit, prayer, authority, taking dominion, ruling and reigning with Christ, headship and submission, divine order, liberty, blessings, discipleship, praise, worship, revelation, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, the laid-down life, discipleship, persecution, and martyrdom*.

Those things listed of the world and of the Kingdom are obvious, but what about *charity work, hiking, music, art, reading a good novel, picnics, sports, laughter, playing, watching TV, games, pets, gardening, cooking, hobbies*? Many things could go in either circle, depending on the source from which they come. Take laughter. From where does the laughter come? From a merry heart? “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.” Prov. 17:22. That is Kingdom laughter. Or does the laughter come from scornful ridicule of another? That is worldly laughter. “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” Luke 6:45. Who we are, who is in us, and whose life is being lived out from us makes the difference.

### ***The rule of Christ***

All that pertains to the Kingdom of God, including those items listed, is within that circle. One way or the other, they all relate to the life of God in Christ. Of all that can be said of the Kingdom of God this one thing stands out—the Kingdom of God is all about Jesus, the King of that Kingdom.

These are the kinds of things that pertain to the Kingdom of God and are manifestations of the Kingdom because:

*The Kingdom of God is the reign and rule of Jesus Christ in the hearts and lives of believers with whom and through whom the government of His Kingdom will be manifested and established in the world.*

Once Jesus has taken dominion of our spirits, souls, minds, and hearts, we will take dominion of the earth in His name. Whoever has dominion of the hearts of men has dominion of the earth and the kingdoms of this world. That is why Satan can claim dominion over the kingdoms of this world. Until now, he has had dominion over the hearts of men. As Satan loses his grip on the hearts of men, he loses his jurisdiction over the kingdoms of the world.

The day is coming when all men will bow the knee to the kingship of Jesus either in judgment or in adoration. At that time the seventh angel will sound, and there will be great voices in heaven saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever." Rev. 11:15. He will be fully known for who He has always been: the King of kings, Lord of lords, the possessor of heaven and earth, Lord of all. He will reign and rule through His people.

Therefore, all that pertains to the Kingdom of God is already at work within us. The Kingdom of God is all about Jesus Christ and His Lordship in our lives. He is at work within us and is performing His life, word, and works through us.

When we are standing in the world, we are living out of the flesh. When we are standing in the Kingdom of God, we are living out of the Spirit. We are being called forth by the Holy Spirit today to step over into that circle and begin living our lives *out* from *within* the Kingdom of God—from within Christ and not from outside of Him.

### ***Living in, but not of the world***

Whereas before, we have been *of* the world, we now see that, while we are *in* the world, we are no longer *of* the world. It is a difference in residence as well as perspective and perception.

Jesus said that we are not of the world because He has chosen us out of the world. John 15:19. Yet, He prayed that we should not be taken out of the world, but that the Father would keep us from the evil one. John 17:15. Nevertheless, we are sent into the world. "As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." John 17:18.

We have been sent into the world so that the world might know Christ through the witness of our oneness with Him. "That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me." John 17:21. The world is supposed to be able to discern that there is a people who are at one with their God. When they see us, they are supposed to see Jesus, the Father. That is living out from *within* the Kingdom of God.

Throughout this book, we will see three possible realities:

One is living on the outside of the circle *reaching in*.

Two is living *out* from *within* the circle.

Three is *doing* out of who Jesus is *in* us; that is, we realize that we are not only in the circle but the circle is within us.

## CHAPTER 6 - THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS INSIDE OF US

Jesus said it and He meant exactly what He said. "The kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:21. The Greek preposition for "within" also translates, "inside of you."

I like that! The Kingdom of God is inside us. Given our previous definition of the Kingdom of God we see it has to be this way. *The Kingdom of God is the reign and rule of Christ in the hearts and lives of men.*

Understanding the importance of the internal, eternal, invisible, immortal, spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God abiding within us is crucial.

### ***Spirit, soul, and body***

What, then, did Jesus mean by the statement, "The Kingdom of God is inside you?"

The Bible teaches that we as individuals are three in one. We are a *spirit* with a *soul* in a *body*. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole *spirit* and *soul* and *body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the *joints and marrow*, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12.

When we were born again, the Holy Spirit entered our spirits and quickened us to new life in Him. He is in us and we are in Him. John 15:1-8; 17:20-23. He resides within our spirits. He is Spirit and He communicates Spirit to spirit.

The Kingdom of God is a reality that initially takes place within the spirit of man through the power-life of His Holy Spirit residing in us.

### ***The Kingdom of God is FROM within us***

Not only is the Kingdom of God within us, it also courses *out from* within us. I say "*out from* within us" for the sake of emphasis. It is an outward expression of an inner reality.

We find, then, that the Kingdom of God is *among* us, *within* us, and goes *out from within* us. What is on the inside of man will display itself outwardly.

The Kingdom of God is coming forth from within us in the manner in which Jesus pictured it to the Samaritan woman at the well: He explained that, "Whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be *in* him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14.

Later Jesus said, "He who believes on Me, as the scripture has said, *out* of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John 7:38.

From these two scriptures we see that the headwaters of this river is within each of us who believe.

We read in Revelation 22 that John was shown "a pure river of water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

Can there be any doubt, based on these other words of Jesus, that this river flows out of us from where Jesus sits enthroned as King—He who is the water of Life?

This river is an expression of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is from within us, flowing outward as a river. It is a river of life.

Revelation 22:2-3 continues to tell us that “on either side of the river there was the tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him.”

The river is the very life and power of God that flows out of Jesus from His throne that is established within us.

Reflect on the poetic verse in Psalms 46:4, keeping in mind that the scriptures confirm that this river of life flows out of us. “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.”

### ***Worship in spirit and truth***

There were two parts to the conversation Jesus had with the Samaritan woman at the well. The first had to do with the “well of water springing up into everlasting life.” The other had to do with the source of true worship. He explained, “*But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is a spirit: and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*” John 4:23-24.

Both parts of this story have this one thing in common. They both take place *in* and *out* from *within* the spirit of man.

The Kingdom of God is within us fully, yet it is gradually overtaking us. It is increasingly coming forth from within us. We may at times be aware of it coming forth from within us. Following are two personal experiences.

### ***Inner praise and worship***

I became acutely aware of what it means for the Kingdom to be inside us one day after I managed to calm the noise of my mind and emotions. I noticed a constant praise deep within me. I understood in the spirit that this praise was always there. My spirit is constantly worshipping the Lord and offering up sacrifices of praise to Him. It is always there even though I am not always aware of it. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in my spirit that is doing the praise and the worship.

I think this is exactly what our Lord Jesus was talking about. I do not necessarily need to go to this church or that meeting or that concert or listen to that music in order to praise Him. I need only to hush my soul and allow that worship to well up from within me.

Many of us as Spirit-filled believers may find ourselves audibly speaking praises either in unknown tongues, spiritual songs, or in our native language while we go about our daily routine. This is not to make a boast because we know that these flow from waters deep within us.

### ***Silent intercession***

I later became aware that a silent intercession was constantly going on in my spirit as well. Again, I am normally not aware of it because of all the noise in the world and in my soul that diverts my attention from it, but every time I turn aside to listen, it is there. I am not always knowledgeable of what is being

prayed, but this I know. It is the Holy Spirit within me doing the praying and making intercession on our behalf.

“Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Rom. 8:26-27.

### ***The exchanged life***

The Kingdom of God inside us is the presence of the King of the Kingdom, Jesus, through the person of His Holy Spirit. His presence in us is changing us. The change is actually the exchange of one life for another. Our lives are being exchanged for Christ’s life that He might live His life in us and through us. Paul captured this truth in Galatians 2:20. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

The exchanged life of Christ in us—living His life through us—means that we live His kind of life and no longer our kind of life. This exchanged life is who we have become and not a behavioral practice. “Well, I’ll try to do better.” No! Christ in us means *Christ in us*.

Because of who He is in us, we have the grace to endure suffering. We have grace for obedience. We are able to lay down our lives for others just as He did. His mercy is who we have become. His love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith and faithfulness, and self-control are the fruit of our lives as well.

We do not allow the enemy to accuse us of being otherwise. We do not allow the enemy to use us otherwise. It is not the enemy’s life we live, but Christ’s. He is in us. We need to know that and live the truth of who we now are in Christ Jesus.

## **CHAPTER 7 - REPENTANCE**

When I first began to share this message of the Kingdom, someone asked me, “How do we step over from outside of the circle (the world) into the inside of the circle (the Kingdom of God)? I took this question to the Lord and later came to understand how.

### ***Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand***

I recalled that the first recorded words out of the mouth of John the Baptist were, “Repent: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matt. 3:2.

Among the first recorded words out of the mouth of Jesus were, “Repent: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15.

Later, Jesus called the original twelve apostles and sent them out to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and told them to preach that the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. He commissioned them to “heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils” saying, “freely you have received, freely give.” Matt. 10:1-8. Mark’s gospel adds that, “They went out and preached that people should repent.” Mark 6:12.

We can be sure that the seventy others commissioned by Jesus coupled the preaching of repentance with their proclamation that “the Kingdom of God has come near to you.” Luke 10:9.

Peter called those gathered on the day of Pentecost to “repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2:38.

How, then, do we step into that circle? We enter the Kingdom of God initially through repentance. What, then, is repentance?

### ***Repentance defined***

The word for “repent” in the Old Testament is *nacham* and has been translated comfort, repent, comforter, and ease. Strong’s Bible Dictionary suggests it means to be sorry, console oneself, regret, be moved to pity, and have compassion. The word, in various contexts in the Old Testament, suggests a turning around or a change of mind.

Most references to repentance in the Old Testament has to do with God either changing His mind or not changing His mind. “Who can tell if God will turn and repent [change His mind], and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?” John 3:9. “And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent [change His mind]: for He is not a man, that He should repent [change His mind].” 1 Sam. 15:29. Then, speaking prophetically of Jesus, the Messiah, “The LORD has sworn, and will not repent [change His mind]. You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” Ps. 110:4. Repentance in these contexts has to mean “change of mind” since God has no sin from which to repent.

The first use of the word repent in the Old Testament is in Exodus 13:17 and it also suggests a change of mind. After Pharaoh let the children of Israel go, God did not lead them through the land of the Philistines although that was the most direct way to the Promised Land. God said, “Lest peradventure the people repent [change their minds] when they see war, and they return to Egypt.”

Nevertheless, they were commanded at other times to turn from their evil and idolatrous ways. When they repented (changed their minds), God repented (changed His mind) regarding His wrath and anger.

A professor of mine called this the FORD of the Old Testament. Israel would Forget God. They would fall into Oppression. They would later Repent and God was faithful to Deliver.

*Metanoeo* is the verb for repentance in the New Testament and conveys a similar meaning. It is always translated “repent.” According to Strong’s Bible Dictionary, it means “to change one’s mind for the better; heartily to amend with abhorrence of one’s past sins.”

It seems that repentance is much more than being sorry for our sins and trying to white knuckle our way out of them. It has much to do with a paradigm shift in our thinking—*how* we think more than *what* we think about something. Therefore:

*Repentance is a change of mind: a paradigm shift that causes us to reconsider our lives and perspectives, producing a different attitude toward our behaviors and turning us to the Lord.*

### ***From what do we repent?***

John the Baptist called the people coming out to him to repent. They came confessing their sins and were being baptized. He told them that if a man has two tunics he should share with the one who has none. The one with food should share with the one who has no food. Tax collectors were told to collect no more than they were required to collect. The soldiers were told not to extort money or falsely accuse people, and be content with their pay. John was laying out principles rather than a legal code. They were expected to get the “spirit” of repentance. From what, then, was he exactly asking them to repent (change their minds)? They were to change their outlook toward others and John gave them specific examples.

Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near.” Matt. 4:17. Soon thereafter, He preached what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew 5-7. He preached the beatitudes and said such things as “you have heard it said by those of old...but I say unto you...” From the very beginning of His three-year ministry, He seemed to be saying that the people had been taught to think a certain way and that is the only way they knew how to think. He wanted to change how they thought about things. Many of them changed, but many of them were offended by His sayings.

Peter told the new believers at Pentecost to repent. We ask again: If indeed, repentance means to rethink or reconsider a previously held position, thought, concept, way of thinking, or a decision, then from what exactly were they being asked to repent?

They were being asked to make a paradigm shift; that is, to change their worldview or look at things from a different point of view, specifically, to a Kingdom of God point of view. We need such a perception transformation.

### ***The setting of the day***

To understand further how the people of Jesus’ time were to change their minds, we need to look at the religious climate at that time. Jesus was in contention with that. He saw how the people were under the unbearable yoke of the Law, the rebuke of the synagogue system, and the heavy handedness of rival religious parties and their leaders. The multitudes only knew to think what they had been taught to think.

Most of what Jesus said and did was in contradiction to this misguided religious system. To paraphrase what Jesus said: “You see them and what they do? That is not it! You see Me, I am the way and the truth and the life. You tried unsuccessfully to enter the Kingdom of God through that religious door, but it left you spiritually bankrupt. Believe on Me and you shall enter the Kingdom of God.”

They really needed to change their minds about God, who He really is, what He intends, and who they were to become in Christ if they truly believed. We can see how offensive that would have been if they were not given “eyes to see and ears to hear.”

### ***Lordship of Jesus Christ***

From what were they to repent? This is the heart of this chapter. Be sure you get this: The Kingdom of God is all about the kingship of Jesus Christ as the Lord of our lives—the reign and rule of Christ in the hearts and lives of men in the earth. Therefore:

*We repent from having not made Jesus Christ Lord of our lives to the extent that we make Him the only One that matters.* Nothing else matters! No one else rules! I am no longer the focal point of my universe. I am no longer “me”-centered, but Christ-centered. No longer my will, but His! It is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me. Gal. 2:20.

This decision has to be more than giving mental assent to an idea or concept. It has to be a living reality in our lives. It has to shake and destroy the very foundation of our lives in order for a new and better foundation to be laid upon which our lives are built. We cannot just flippantly say, “Jesus is Lord of my life.” He really *has to be* Lord of my whole life. He really *has to be* the only one that matters.

How do we get there? That paradigm shift we call repentance occurs when God reveals Himself to us and we begin to see things from His point of view. We, then, make a conscious decision to receive Him as the absolute, sovereign Lord and King of our lives and then surrender, daily.

God grants repentance. Paul wrote, “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?” Rom. 2:4. Weymouth New Testament reads, “...that the goodness of God is gently drawing you to repentance?” That is, ... gently drawing you to a paradigm shift? In Acts 11:18, Peter speaks of “the repentance which leads to life.”

Whatever else might have come into play when the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost regarding repentance, one thing is certain: they were to repent (change their minds) about what they believed about this Jesus and His place in their hearts and lives. Could they now say, as Peter had previously said by revelation, that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God? They were to repent from unbelief. Once they truly believed, they were to be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins, at which time they would receive the Holy Spirit. They would be born again from on high. They would have the life and light of Jesus invading their souls and spirits.

Through such repentance, we take that first step into the circle of all that pertains to the Kingdom of God. Repentance then escorts us to the rebirth experience.

## CHAPTER 8 - BORN AGAIN

A paradigm shift was defined in the previous chapter on repentance as *a change of mind that causes us to reconsider our lives and perspectives, producing a different attitude toward our behaviors and turning us to the Lord.*

Do you suppose, then, that Nicodemus had his paradigm challenged when Jesus said to him that he had to be born again if he were to see and enter the Kingdom of God? John 3. I think so! What, then, does it mean to be born again? Nicodemus did not know.

The beginning of the answer to this question parallels the miraculous birth of Jesus. We must see this! We must understand what kind of life comes into us when we enter the Kingdom of God.

### ***The birth of Jesus***

What does the birth of Jesus have to do with us being born again? It has everything to do with it. Here is the story from the gospel of Luke.

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin named Mary. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

Mary marveled, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

I want to stress the importance of what the angel said to her. *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. Luke 1:26-35 (NASB).*

### ***Son of the Most High***

Joseph was betrothed to Mary when he found her with child and, being a righteous man, did not want to expose her publicly and bring disgrace upon her. He considered quietly divorcing her. But "an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." Matt. 1:20.

Mary was conceived by the Holy Spirit and gave birth to the Son of the Most High God.

### ***Many sons to glory***

Various scriptures reveal the Father's heart to have sons (both male and female) after the pattern of His only begotten, Son, Jesus Christ. Be empowered as you read them!

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become *the sons of God*, even to them who believe on His name." John 1:12.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the *sons of God*." Rom. 8:14.

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation [revealing] of *the sons of God*." Rom. 8:19.

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive *the adoption of sons*. And because *you are sons*, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Gal. 4:4-6.

“That you may be blameless and harmless, *the sons of God*, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” Phil. 2:15.

“For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing *many sons unto glory*, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Heb. 2:10.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called *the sons of God*: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we *the sons of God*, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure.” 1 John 3:1-3.

### ***Born of the Spirit***

We too are born of the same Holy Spirit as was Jesus. The seed from the Father that was in Jesus is the very same seed that is in us who believe. It has to be. Otherwise, we cannot be sons of God. Listen in on this conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3:1-7.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. He slipped off one night to have a closet meeting with Jesus.

Nicodemus conceded, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that you do, except God be with him.”

Jesus knew what he was seeking and answered him, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus was puzzled. “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?”

Jesus responded, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

“Marvel not that I said unto you, You must be born again. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

Peter, likewise, speaks of this new birth experience saying that we are “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever.” 1 Pet. 1:23.

“If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who does righteousness is born of Him.” 1 John 2:29.

### ***The word, the seed, Jesus.***

John 1:1-3, 14 states that Jesus is the word of God made flesh. Jesus, then, made it clear in His parables that seed is a type of the word. Luke 8:11. Seed is also used in reference to being born again. 1 Pet. 1:23. It is not a far stretch for us to see that Jesus is the word of God which is like seed planted within our spirits in order to birth new life within us. When we receive that seed, Jesus, He abides within us.

The Holy Spirit who came upon Mary is the same Holy Spirit that comes upon us. Just as Jesus was born of the Spirit as the Son of God, so are we born again of the Spirit as sons of God. We are born again as sons of El Elyon, God Most High.

The seed of anything has embedded within it the DNA to become the same kind of thing that brought it forth. In this case, the DNA of every true believer stands for Divine Nature Attributes. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:22.

When the word of God, either written or spoken, is paired with the Holy Spirit, it has the life of Christ embedded in it. The parables of Jesus make this clear, but do not think of this rebirth as a mere parable. This is a reality in the Kingdom of God. The word of God literally produces the Life of God when received in the good ground of a living soul.

### ***Born a new creation***

Paul declared, "Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is a new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17. Think of this as being born again into a whole different species of beings. We are no longer of that old man nature of flesh and sin, but are now a new man of spirit and righteousness.

Again he wrote, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the *firstborn* of every creature." Col. 1:14-15. A firstborn signifies that there are others born afterwards.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." James 1:17-19 (NKJV).

Hear without it becoming a matter of pride and arrogance—we really are of a different species.

This reality is too mysterious for the earthly mind to understand. We enter into Him and He enters into us. We become one in spirit. Just as Jesus and the Father were one, so are we one with Him.

When we are born again, we receive the life of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit and, in so doing; we receive the Kingdom of God. That is how we can say, "the Kingdom of God is inside us." The Kingdom is in us and we are in the Kingdom.

## CHAPTER 9 - RESURRECTION LIFE

Having been born again unto eternal life, we have begun a journey in the Spirit “toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 3:14. This journey is “in Christ Jesus.”

This journey cannot be taken in the exhausting strength of our old self-willed man of flesh and sin. It is a journey that has its source in a new kind of life—resurrection life.

This eternal life has within it resurrection power that is at work within us now.

### ***At the last day***

You ask, “But I thought the resurrection was something that comes at the end, after death?” It does. That would be the resurrection of the dead that is promised to all believers “at the last day.” Numerous scriptures attest to this fact in the New Testament. Luke 14:14; 20:27-36; John 5:29; 6:39-40, 44; Acts 24:15-21; Rom. 6:5; 8:11; and Rev. 20:1-6.

Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 the kind of body we will have at that last day resurrection. He further wrote, “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” 1 Cor. 15:52.

### ***Jesus is the resurrection***

Still, we see that this resurrection life is already at work within us. We begin with this foundational truth that Jesus is the resurrection.

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and used the occasion to further declare who He was. He said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” John 11:25. The text reads, “*I am* the resurrection....” The Greek for “I am” is *ego eimi*. When these two terms are used together it literally reads, “I, I am.” The duplication of the “I, I am” is added for emphasis. The Septuagint uses this expression in Exodus 3:14 to translate the Hebrew name for God. Jesus, in using this expression declared that He is the great I AM, the One who revealed Himself and His name to Moses by the burning bush. God’s name, *hayah* (or Yahveh), means, I AM that I AM (that is; “to be, to exist, to be in existence;” also, I AM THE BEING).

Jesus did not say that He *will be* the resurrection. All things pertaining to God, as indicated in His name, continue to exist currently. He is the eternal now. The Kingdom of God realm is, as with God Himself, non-dimensional. He is not subject to time and space.

Jesus is the resurrection from the dead. John 11:1-44. His ability to raise us up comes from out of who He is. He is the resurrection. It is the very gift of Himself to us. Had He not been resurrected from the dead as attested to by many witnesses, His claim that He was the resurrection and the life would be an empty and meaningless boast. His resurrection was a demonstration of the power of God’s promise to raise us up. Rom. 6:5.

### ***Recipients now***

Unquestionably, we will be resurrected at the last day; nevertheless, other scriptures show that we are already recipients of that resurrection life.

Jesus declared that He is the resurrection and the life. He explained, “He who believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” John 11:25-26a. We look at death through fleshly eyes and say “He died.” God never sees His holy ones as

dying or dead. From His perspective, He sees the eternal, resurrected, born again, recreated persons as “the living.” We just pass from this location to another. We need God’s perspective. “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints [holy ones].” Ps. 116:15.

Paul wrote, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, *has quickened us together* with Christ, (by grace you are saved) and *has raised us up together*, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Eph. 2:4-7. (The Greek verb used here is an unqualified past tense without reference to duration or completion of the action.) That “He *has raised us up together*” is something Christ did in the past that continues as a present reality.

Likewise, Paul wrote, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly *we also shall be* in the likeness of His resurrection.” Rom. 6:3-5 (NKJV). “*We also shall be*” is future tense; yet, read these statements side by side and see that it speaks of a present occurrence that continues into the future:

Christ baptism into death/our baptism into His death.

Christ raised from the dead/our walk in newness of life in Him.

United with Him in His death/united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection.

If we have been united with Him in death, then it follows that we are united with Him in His resurrection. It occurs simultaneously and continuously. How can we walk in “newness of life” if that “newness of life” [resurrection life] is postponed for a later time?

When we compare scripture with scripture, in this case Paul with Paul, we find agreement with Romans 6:3-5. He wrote that we are buried with Him in baptism, “*wherein also you are risen with Him* through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead.” Col. 2:9-12. The phrase, “*we are risen*” in the Greek speaks of a present occurrence that continues into the future.

Jesus is the Life of God. He said, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” John 14:6. He also said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” The Greek word used here for *life* is *zoe*. It is different from biological or soul-life. *Zoe* is God-kind of life. God-life is eternal, immortal, and invisible.

Jesus *is* the resurrection and the life. When we received His eternal life, we as spirit beings also received His immortal, invisible, resurrection life.

Though we have not yet been raised from the dead “at the last day,” His resurrection power is, nevertheless, already in us in that we are in Him and He is in us. This resurrection life is the kind of life by which we currently live. It is already at work within us. Paul wrote the Philippians saying, “That I may know Him, and *the power of His resurrection*, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” Phil. 3:10.

### ***Resurrection life depicted***

How, then, do we depict this present day resurrection life?

*Resurrection life is the indwelling presence of the resurrected Christ empowering us to live, reign, and rule with Him as sons of God.*

Therefore, we firmly acclaim that resurrection life is not an “it,” but a Who—the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who said, “*I am* the resurrection....”

He is the power of God’s resurrection life hovering over us, working in us, and operating through us. He is that resurrection power of His eternal life—a life that is fully in us, yet experienced “in part.”

This is the kind of life that was birthed into us—the kind of life that causes us to step over into the circle of all that pertains to the Kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER 10 - IN PART

In the beginning of this writing, I pointed to an imaginary circle in order to make the distinction between the world and the Kingdom of God realm. Outside of the circle is all that pertains to the world. Within the circle is all that pertains to the Kingdom of God. We step over into that circle through repentance and being born again, receiving His resurrection life in us.

I now want to apply the term “in part” to this circle. While this circle represents all that pertains to the Kingdom of God, it is currently being experienced “in part.” We do not yet see and know the fullness of the Kingdom.

Paul wrote, “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away...For now we see through a glass [mirror] darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” 1 Cor. 13:9-10, 12.

For now we can only know and prophesy “in part.” We can only see through a glass darkly.

### ***Earnest money***

Various other scriptures confirm this idea that we can only know “in part” and see “dimly” in this present age. Paul wrote, “Now He who has established us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God; Who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” 2 Cor. 1:21-22. The NASB version calls it a *pledge*. The NIV reads, “set his seal of ownership on us, and puts His Spirit in our hearts as a *deposit*, guaranteeing what is to come.”

Paul also wrote, “In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, *you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest [pledge, down payment] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.*” Eph. 1:13-14.

Earnest money is the money put down to confirm a contract. God has entered into a contract with us and has given us His Holy Spirit as a down payment—as earnest money so to speak. It is a partial payment toward the full payment of something later on. The full payment can be “banked” on.

Notice in reference to all those faithful ones in Hebrews, it is written, “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” Heb. 11:39-40. God is withholding their perfection until that time when we shall all, in the twinkling of an eye, be perfected.

### ***We know in part***

“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” 1 Cor. 13:9-10.

There remains the promise, however, that we will come in “the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Eph. 4:13. We have not yet come to that time. Until then, all the gifts and ministries of the Spirit are needed.

Paul understood that he had not yet attained the perfection that was yet to come. He wrote, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things

which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 3:12-14. He had not attained it at the time he wrote that letter, but he was reaching forth as though it were attainable even in his lifetime.

Paul expressed confidence in the Lord toward the Philippians that the good work Christ had begun in them would be completed “until the day of Jesus Christ.” Phil. 1:6.

### ***From acorn to a full-grown tree***

Everything that comes from seed has within it the DNA to reproduce itself in fullness. If I held up an acorn from an oak tree and asked, “What do you see?” You would most logically answer, “I see an acorn.” Yet, within that acorn is all that is needed for it to grow into a full-grown oak tree. You might as well have answered, “I see an oak tree.”

So it is with us. Once we received the seed of Christ into our spirits, we died to the old man of Self in order for Him to take root in the regenerated soil of our souls, springing forth first as a sapling then, in the fullness of time, becoming a full grown tree planted by the River of Life, bearing fruit a hundredfold. Within that seed was all the DNA (Divine Nature Attribute) necessary to bring forth in due season the fullness of the glory of Christ.

When the fullness of time comes, we will no longer “see through a glass darkly,” but we will see the glory of the Lord, even in our own faces because we will have been changed into that same image by the Holy Spirit of the Lord. We will become what we see.

For now, the term “in part” is added to the larger circle. The journey is taking us onward and upward into the fullness of all that pertains to the Kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER 11 - THE CIRCLE WITHIN THE CIRCLE

f there is an “in part” of something in this present age as written about in the previous chapter, then the fullness of that something can be anticipated. Paul wrote, “But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” 1 Cor. 13:9-11.

While talking to a gathering of people about this idea of stepping into the circle of all that pertains to the Kingdom of God, I envisioned a smaller circle within the larger circle.

I was asked the difference between the two circles. At first, I merely mentioned that the inner circle represented the fullness of time. By the fullness of time, I meant the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles: the end of this present age and the beginning of the next—the time of the Lord’s second coming.

### ***The inner circle***

*All that pertains to the Kingdom of God in the outer “in part” circle will either pass away or come into fullness, perfection, and maturity as represented in the smaller circle within.*

The “in part” (down payment) of such things is absorbed (done away with) when the fullness of what is promised is fully paid.

Righteousness and holiness will be experienced in fullness, perfection, and maturity. We will come into perfect knowledge, wisdom, and understanding; perfect mercy; perfect discernment of and power over the powers of darkness; perfect health and healing; perfect love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness faith (faithfulness), gentleness, and self-control; perfect authority in the spirit of humility; perfect obedience; perfect knowledge of the will of God because His word will have been perfected in us.

When the fullness of time comes, the acorn will have become the oak tree it was destined to be. It is in our DNA. It has been promised to us.

### ***Centrality of Jesus Christ***

Jesus, of course, is at the very core of this circle. In Him is the fullness of God. In Him is found the promised rest that is of God. In Him is the glory of God. In Him is the love of God.

Abiding in Him completely and continually is when, where, and how we too will come into His promised glorification.

This promised glorification is when we will experience the fulfillment of Hebrews 2:10 where it says that “it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in *bringing many sons unto glory*, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

This glorification is when we will see the fulfillment of Romans 8:19—“the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.”

### ***Oneness with Christ***

When we were born again, we were *translated* (changed), from Adam to Christ. From that day to this, we are being *transformed* into the image of Christ. Finally, we will be *transfigured* into our glorious bodies as pictured by Jesus on the mountain with Moses and Elijah. Matt. 17:1-2.

We are in *transition* from living this earthly life as we have known it to living a glorified life with Christ in order that we might reign and rule with Him in the earth.

We will be as one body, one corporate man with Christ as our head. We will live in absolute obedience to and blissful union with Christ our head. We will be one with Him and He with us, even as He and the Father are one in fullness.

We cannot comprehend what that will be like. We can only hope for that time to come when we all with unveiled faces will be caught up into Him.

### ***The sanctification process***

We understand that we enter the Kingdom of God through repentance and being born again. The focus of our concern now is how to get from that outer “in part” circle into that inner “fullness” circle. We enter through the sanctification process.

Sanctification simply means separation. We are no longer of Adam, being conformed to this world, but are in the process of being transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Rom. 12:2.

We *were* born again, we *are being* sanctified, and we *will* be glorified. We are becoming who we already are in Christ Jesus.

This sanctification process is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Rom. 15:16. That is why we need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. He is the power of Christ’s lordship in our lives. “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Phil. 1:6.

We testify that we are presently in that transition between the “in part” and the “fullness” when we will be transfigured (changed) into the glorified likeness of our Lord.

## **CHAPTER 12 - FROM PENTECOST TO TABERNACLES**

The fullness we anticipate is the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

God appointed three main feasts to be observed annually by the Israelites: the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles (also known as the Feast of Booths or the Feast of Ingathering). They occur in that order. Passover and Pentecost are observed in the spring of the year and Tabernacles is in the fall.

These three feasts of Israel's worship correlate with the three courts of the Tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness. These are the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. Reference, hereafter, is made to the Outer Court of Passover, the Holy Place of Pentecost, and the Holy of Holies of Tabernacles.

Passover was fulfilled in history when Jesus died on the cross as the sacrificial Lamb of God. It is fulfilled in us when we first believe and are born again. This feast is pictured in the offering of sacrifices in the Outer Court of the Tabernacle.

Pentecost was fulfilled in history when the Holy Spirit fell upon the believers on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts, chapter two. It is fulfilled in us when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit as were the New Testament believers. This feast is pictured in the service that was performed in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle of Moses wherein was the showbread, the candlesticks, and the altar of incense.

These two feasts have been fulfilled in history, but the Feast of Tabernacles has neither been fulfilled historically nor in our personal experiences. This feast is pictured in the Holy of Holies where the High Priest made atonement for sin annually. This feast will be fulfilled in us when we come into the fullness of His glory.

### ***Fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles***

Since Passover and Pentecost occurred on specific dates in history, then it follows that Tabernacles will occur on a specific date, placing its fulfillment in current history also. Nevertheless, the ushering in of Tabernacles will mark the end of this present age and the beginning of the Kingdom age in fullness. Though we do not know what this transition will look like, it will be the fullness of the glory of God revealed in a people who are still walking around in their earth suits—the manifestation of the sons of God of Romans 8:19, the many sons brought to glory of Hebrews 2:10, and the coming forth of the manchild of Revelation 12:1-8. This corporate manchild are those who will overcome him (the dragon, Devil, Satan) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and by not loving their lives unto the death. Rev. 12:11.

The Feast of Tabernacles (also called Ingathering) will be fulfilled in history when Jesus fully appears to gather unto Himself His assembly of called-out-ones—the body of Christ coming into perfect union with the head of the body, Jesus Christ as Lord. It will be fulfilled in us at that time and we will all come “to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Eph. 4:13. This will not be the end of the world, but it will be the end of this present age and the beginning of the fullness of the Kingdom age on earth as it is in heaven.

At the present time, we are between two feasts—the feast of Pentecost and the feast of Tabernacles. As great and glorious as Passover and Pentecost were, there has to be more. Pentecost cannot be the “full” gospel as many Pentecostals and charismatic believers have called it. There is more. This longing for “more” wells up within us. Even so, we are not content with simply “more.” We want “all.” We want the fullness, the perfection, the maturity God has ordained for us. We want all of God. We want His

perfect will in operation in our lives. We want only His purposes fulfilled in us. We want to bring all glory, and power, and riches to our God and King. We want His Kingdom to come.

### ***We shall be as He is***

When Tabernacles is fulfilled, we will be radically changed. Paul wrote, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:18. The word *changed* in the Greek is from our English word metamorphosis meaning, "a change of the form or nature of a thing or person into a completely different one, by natural or supernatural means."

Two scriptures in 1 John seem to be in contradiction, but are not so when we understand the nature of the Kingdom of God. One verse says that, "As He is, so *are* we in this world." 1 John 4:17. That speaks of a present tense situation. When this verse was written, Jesus was already glorified and seated at the right hand of God the Father in the heavenly places. Paul said we *are* seated with Him in heavenly places. Eph. 2:6. We understand that this is a present reality that we accept as truth by faith. The other verse in 1 John anticipates that "when He shall appear, we *shall be* like Him; for we shall see Him as he is." 1 John 3:2. The first verse says that we "are" as He is and the other verse says that we "will be" as He is. Which is it, a present day reality or a future reality?

These two verses in 1 John tell us that we already are what we are becoming. That which is in heaven is eternal, beyond time and space. Jesus told His disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Matt. 6:9-10. We are to pray for what is already a reality in heaven.

Both verses are in the context of love. God is love and Jesus is the "image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." Col. 1:15. Therefore, we too will be love as He is love. We are love, we are becoming love, and we will be love.

In the inner circle, all of the aspects of the Kingdom in the larger circle will either come into perfection (fullness, maturity) or be done away with altogether. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, "Charity [love] never fails: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

## **CHAPTER 13 - KINGDOM AUTHORITY**

The appeal throughout this writing is for us to live our lives *out* from *within* the Kingdom of God.

At first, I was asked, “How do we step from the world over into that circle of all that pertains to the Kingdom of God?” I answered, “through repentance” and being born again into the new life through faith. That is how we enter into the Kingdom of God.

The second “how” question was answered by saying that we will proceed onward to the inner circle through sanctification, wherein the Holy Spirit is separating us from the world unto God in Christ—conforming us into the image of Jesus Christ.

Now, we ask: How do we live *out* from *within* the Kingdom of God while waiting for the perfect to come? The answer is found in understanding Kingdom authority.

### ***Authority of the Creator***

God, as creator, is the highest authority in the universe. He is sovereign over all power, authority, and government in the world. No authority exists unless He has declared it. “He changes the times and the season. He removes kings and He sets up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and to those who know understanding.” Dan. 2:21. He rules in the kingdoms of men and gives them to whom He wills and sets up over it the lowliest of men. Dan. 4:17b, 25b.

When God spoke each day of creation into being saying, “Let there *be*...,” it had to *be* just because He said so. Nothing existed higher than He to contest His command. He had the authority and the power to cause it to happen. God spoke through Isaiah saying, “So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Isa. 55:11. It will be as God spoke. It cannot be otherwise.

Jesus proclaimed to His followers that the Father had given Him all power [authority]. Matt. 28:18. He not only finished the works of the Father, He is the finished works of God. John 5:36. While praying, He said, “I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.” John 17:4. As He drew His final breath on the cross, He declared to all creation saying, “It is finished.” He was not talking about His life. He was talking about the works of the Father He had been sent to complete.

A centurion came to Jesus in Capernaum beseeching Him to heal his servant who was tormented with palsy. Jesus offered to go with him to heal the servant. The centurion knew that Jesus had the authority to simply say so and it would be done. The centurion acknowledged that he himself was a man under authority and had men under his authority—when he told them to go they went, or come and they came. Jesus marveled at the man’s faith. Jesus told him to go his way and, as he had believed, so shall it be done to him. His servant was healed in that hour. Matt. 8:5-13.

It had to be as Jesus said because He is sovereign. Other than the Father, no one existed greater than He who could contest His command for that servant to be healed. His authority reached deep into the spiritual realm as well as the natural realm.

### ***Authority of Believers***

Jesus, having been given all authority by the Father, authorized His followers to “heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely you have received, freely give.” Matt. 10:8. Before His ascension into heaven He authorized them to “go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I

have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matt. 28:19-20. They went out in confidence, knowing that He had the authority to commission them. We as believers today are given the same authority.

Even the demons know who is “authorized” in the name of Jesus. Check out any of the scriptures having to do with evil spirits. Mark 3:11; Luke 4:36; 10:20. The story in Acts 19:13-16 is most convincing. Certain Jews identified as the seven sons of Sceva were attempting to practice exorcism in the name of Jesus whom Paul preached. The evil spirits said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” The spirits came out of the man and leaped on them, overcoming them and prevailing against them so that the men fled out of the house naked and wounded. They may have gone through all the right motions and used all the right words, but they had not been authorized.

When one who is authorized demands the demon to “go,” it has to go and it knows it has to go. When one is authorized to heal the sick, that sickness has to go and it knows it has to go.

Those of us who received Jesus and believe on His name have been given the authority to be sons of God. Joh. 1:12. We have been authorized to be sons, and as sons we have been given authority. Do we know who we are? (As I typed this declaration into this text, my heart leaped with joy just knowing this.)

The Father bestowed all authority upon His only begotten Son. Through the Son and His Holy Spirit, we as His sons have had measures of authority bestowed upon us. Nothing exists that can contest the orders we have been authorized to carry out by the Father through the Son and His Holy Spirit.

### ***Obedient to exercise authority***

Authority is powerless without obedience. Once we come to know our part in the body of Christ, we need to be obedient to function accordingly, thereby releasing the life and power of Christ from within us.

With the assignments of our gifts and ministries comes authority, and with authority comes responsibility. We have been given authority to function in our gifts and ministries. It is that which has been given to us. (Even though we understand that all things belong to God.) Yet, if assigned to us, it is our stewardship. We have jurisdiction over it. It is our area of administration. If we own it, we have authority over it. We do not have authority over what belongs to others. Others do not have authority over what has been given to us.

Therefore, we are to be obedient to exercise the authority that has been given to us by the Holy Spirit. By His leading, we can say what is to happen or not happen. We are to simply declare what is to happen. If it truly belongs to us and we truly have the authority over it, then it has to be as we say simply because we say so.

The Kingdom will come on earth as it is in heaven as we faithfully stand the ground we have been given to hold.

We can say it either way. We are to function in the gift or ministry that has been bestowed upon us, or we can exercise the authority to accomplish the function to which we have been assigned. The latter understanding seems to me to be more, shall we say, “authoritative”—conclusive, dynamic. Therefore:

*We live our lives out from within the Kingdom of God by being obedient to exercise the authority that has been given to each of us in accordance with our commission.*

## ***Living a life of obedience***

Jesus did only what He saw the Father doing. The Son did nothing of Himself. John 5:19. The mark of true sonship is exactly that. The sons do nothing of themselves. We carry the gene of our Father; therefore, we image our Father. We were originally created in His image, lost it in the fall, and are re-created in His image through the blood of Jesus—by grace through faith.

The Holy Spirit does only what the Lord Jesus sent Him to do. The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth. He does not speak of Himself, but whatever He hears, that is what He speaks. He shows us things to come. John 16:13.

We, then, are to be led by the Holy Spirit in *all* things. The Holy Spirit will always lead in concert with the inspired written word of God. One confirms the other.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Rom. 8:14. God gives His Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. Acts 5:32.

What we live *out* comes from *within*. That life-power is already inside us. It is the life and power of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit within us, living *out* from *within* us—the exchanged life.

We live by the power of the Holy Spirit who alone enables us to turn the other cheek; to do good to those who persecute us; to refrain from gossip; to think upon whatever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; to heal the sick; to give sight to the blind; to cast out demons; to raise the dead; to operate in words of wisdom, knowledge, prophecy; to perform miracles; to speak in tongues or have the interpretation of tongues; to love God with all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strengths; to love our neighbor as ourselves; and to preach the Kingdom of God in Spirit and power—all those kinds of things in the circle that pertain to the Kingdom of God whether we are in the home, on the front lines of battle, in the marketplace, or on foreign mission fields.

We have this kind of authority as sons of God—heirs and joint heirs, kings and priests of the Kingdom.

## **CHAPTER 14 - PERFECTION, MATURITY, FULLNESS**

Having begun in the world, we repented and were born again, thereby stepping into that “in part” circle of the Kingdom of God. Now, we are being drawn to the center of “the fullness” of all that pertains to the Kingdom of God. We are being prepared to come into perfection.

Jesus exhorted, “Be therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.” Matt. 5:48. The Greek word translated *perfect* in this verse also means brought to completion, fully accomplished, fully developed, having achieved a certain standard. (Read other uses of this word in Col. 4:12; Matt. 19:21; and James. 1:4; 3:2.)

How is that possible? Can anyone expect to come into perfection this side of heaven? Most Christians think not. Increasing numbers of us think so.

Let me carry through the illustration of the acorn described in the chapter titled “In Part.” The acorn has all the DNA needed to become a full-grown, fruit-bearing oak tree. Even though it is not a fully-grown oak, it is, as an acorn, perfect. It cannot grow into anything else but an oak tree. In the same way, we as believers have the fullness of Christ within us. We simply have not matured into that fullness. While we are perfect, in that He is the Perfect One living His life in us and through us, we are not yet fully grown. Nevertheless, all that is needed for us to be fully-grown is already within us.

Though the DNA is there, we cannot achieve perfection in our own strength. It is the Holy Spirit’s job to bring God’s elect into maturity and fullness. The assurance of an acorn coming to fruition depends on it falling to the ground, dying, and being properly nurtured. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:6, “I have planted, Apollos watered, but God was giving the growth.” (NAS)

### ***We cannot save ourselves***

We once were fallen and did not have the capacity to change ourselves. Do we now have the capacity to perfect ourselves? Paul asked the Galatians: “Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?” Gal. 3:3.

This is one of the major issues that Jesus addressed in His ministry. The message is simple. The law cannot save us. Moreover, even if obeying the law could save us, we would have to keep it all. Gal. 5:3; Jas. 2:10. The law is righteous and we have to be righteous in order to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law. We cannot do that in our own strength.

### ***Our substitute***

So we are left at the mercy of another. That other person is the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to know that. He is our substitute. He did for us what we could not do for ourselves. When we sin, something perfect has to die to pay for that sin because the “wages of sin is death.” Rom. 6:23. If we die because of our own sin, it avails nothing because we are not perfect. Never could be! Thank God, He planned from before the foundation of the world to send us a substitute in death. Jesus died that we might live.

The musical chorus by Elis J. Crum says it all. “He paid a debt He did not owe; I owed a debt I could not pay; I needed someone to wash my sins away. And now I sing a brand new song, amazing grace. Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay.”

He did not die for us so we could keep on living as we had always lived. He did not die so that we could live on forever in our fallen Adamic condition. He died that we might have a new kind of life—His.

A substitution took place. He was our substitute in death in order that He might be our substitute in life. For this reason, Paul wrote, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20.

This is the exchanged life.

As expressed in a previous chapter titled "Born Again," we understand that we are now a new creation. A new and different life is at work within us. Once we were lost and fallen, dead in sin. Now we are found, raised up, and alive to righteousness in Christ Jesus. The law was once written on tablets of stone, but is now written in our hearts. The governor once lived outside of us, but now He lives inside us. We are no longer our own because we have been bought with a price. 1 Cor. 6:19-20.

He did not die for us that we might go to heaven in that "sweet by and by," but that we might have His life abundantly in the "nasty now and now"—that we might live a new and different life here and now.

### ***Being conformed into His likeness***

Jesus, through the person of His Holy Spirit, lives in us and is in the process of conforming us into His image. "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." Rom. 8:29.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:6.

He "will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." Phil. 3:21 (NKJV).

Because "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:18.

Even King David saw this long before and prayed, "As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness." Ps. 17:15 (NKJV).

A potter sits at the wheel and, looking at the lump of clay, decides what it shall be, then, crafts it according to the vision. Jesus sees us as finished and sent His Holy Spirit to conform us into that image—the image of Christ. He is the potter. We are the clay. Isaiah 64:8: "But now, O LORD, You are our father; we are the clay, and You are our potter; and we all are the work of Your hand."

Yes! We can be perfect even as our heavenly Father is perfect because we are His sons—we have believed and have been born again by His Holy Spirit. As His sons, we now have His DNA (Divine Nature Attributes). The illustration of the acorn illustrates how we can say that we are perfected, we are being perfected, and we will be perfected. All is true. In this exact same way we can proclaim that the Kingdom of God has come, is coming, and will come.

He will have a people who will perfectly show forth His glory in these last days.

God's grand intention is found in Ephesians 4:11-13. "And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the

knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

“Until we all come....”

## **CHAPTER 15 - ENTERING INTO HIS SABBATH REST**

As we approach the time of the “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”—the fulfillment of Tabernacles as illustrated by the inner circle, we find that several terms help summarize it. One of these is the word rest as spoken of in Hebrews 4:9.

It reads, “There remains therefore, a rest for the people of God.” Whenever we see “therefore” in a paragraph or a sentence in the Bible, we want to ask what is the “therefore” there for? This verse is in the context of Hebrews Chapter 3:16 through 4:13.

### ***Failure of the Hebrew Christians***

First, we look at the Hebrew Christians to whom this treatise was written. Scholars largely agree that the Jews who had become believers in Jesus Christ were under severe persecution from the Jews of the synagogue. They were being pressed to renounce their faith in Jesus and return to their old ways in Judaism.

Hebrews has been called the book of better things. Jesus, the Christ, represented a better priesthood, a better covenant, a better testament, a better tabernacle, and a better sacrifice. These better things are in contrast to the requirements under the Law.

Had the Hebrew believers knuckled under the pressure to go back under the Law, they would have essentially denied the death and resurrection of Jesus who died for them once and for all. They would be walking away from all these “better things.”

Consequently, there would remain no further sacrifice for their sins. By denying their faith, they would have fallen from grace. This would be a very grievous thing for them to do. To go back under the Law as a means of obtaining their righteousness would have been an act of unbelief in the finished work of God in Christ.

The writer of Hebrews drew a line of similarity between what they were doing and what the Israelites in the wilderness had done.

### ***Failure of the Israelites in the wilderness***

Israel’s experience with their God in the wilderness is a tale of remarkable unbelief.

God wanted the children of Israel to know with whom they would be entrusting themselves; therefore, He revealed His name to them through Moses. His name is Yahveh. This Yahveh was the God who previously had made Himself known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He wanted them to know Him by name so they would know that He was the One doing these things and revealing Himself more clearly as they went along.

Yahveh delivered the Israelites from the severe oppression of Pharaoh, giving them a reason to trust Him to be their God in every way.

He miraculously led them through the Red Sea as they looked back upon the drowning Egyptian army, giving them a reason to trust Him to be their God in every way.

He gave them water from the rock when they were thirsty, giving them a reason to trust Him to be their God in every way.

He gave them daily manna in the wilderness for food, giving them a reason to trust Him to be their God in every way.

He gave them the Law (Torah), the Tabernacle, the feast days that they might know Him and worship Him, giving them a reason to trust Him to be their God in every way.

He miraculously sustained them for forty years in the wilderness, giving them a reason to trust Him to be their God in every way.

Time and time again, however, they rebelled, made idols for themselves, and did not trust Him to be their God in every way.

God did not intend for them to wander in the wilderness for those forty years. Rather, He intended for them to enter straight away into the land of Canaan, the land He had promised their father Abraham as an inheritance.

They did not enter in straight away, nor did those who were born in Egypt enter in at all, except for Joshua and Caleb. They all perished in the wilderness. They were unable to enter in because of unbelief.

The Israelites had only been in the wilderness a short time when twelve men were sent to spy out this land of promise. They saw the bounty of the land, but also saw the giants. Joshua and Caleb gave a faith report, believing that they could take the land. The other ten gave an evil and fearful report of unbelief. The people believed the evil report rather than believing the ability of their God to give them the land. After all God did to demonstrate His power to deliver, they still did not trust Him. Consequently, God, in His wrath, did not permit them to enter in at all.

### ***Unbelief is sin***

Both the Hebrew believers and the Israelites in the wilderness stood on the common ground of unbelief. While their circumstances were different, the core issue was the same. They did not trust Yahveh to be their God—to lead them, protect them, heal them, provide for them, and to fight their battles for them. They did not trust Him for their salvation. This, then, was their sin. Their sin was unbelief. Their unbelief was considered disobedience and rebellion.

All unbelief is sin. “What is not of faith is sin.” Rom. 14:23. When it comes to sin in the book of Hebrews, we can know that it is primarily talking about their failure to believe in God, to trust in Him through Christ to be their sufficiency.

Here is the thing about faith and sin. When we fail to believe that God did what He did in the life of His Son, we bind ourselves to do the very thing we do not want to do. We do not believe that Jesus really saved us from our sin. We say that He did, but we go on sinning as though He had not yet completed His job. We fail to recognize that He is the Scapegoat. Our sin was strapped on Him and He was, figuratively speaking, sent out into the wilderness to carry it away. If He carried it away, why do we still carry it?

Now the good news is the reverse of this. If we truly believe that Jesus carried our sins away, that He washed our sins away, that He was our substitute on the cross—so many different ways to describe it—then, we find ourselves no longer doing the very thing we did not want to do. It’s gone. It really is gone because we dared to take Him at His word. This kind of faith does not give consent to sin; it is our deliverance from sin.

### ***Entering His rest***

Now, we see that when we really take Him at His word, when we truly believe that He is who He said He was and has done all that He has said that He has done, we enter into His promised rest. That is it! We are able to enter into His promised rest through faith.

When we hear the Gospel message (the Good News of Jesus Christ) and mix it with faith, we are set free from all sin, unforgiveness, shame, worry, fear, and condemnation. When we are set free from those kinds of things, we are at peace. We have His rest. We rest in His blessed assurance.

### ***Our failure today***

We fail to enter into His rest today because of our unbelief, leading to dead works. When we fail to accept all that Jesus did for us, we will devise our own plans of salvation and righteousness.

All of the works of the flesh, all the things we try to do for God in our own strength are nothing more than dead works. It is wood, hay, and stubble to be cast into the fire and burned.

We bind ourselves to so much unnecessary religious works because of unbelief. Thus, we are in unrest and lack that peace that passes all understanding in our lives.

### ***A People of promise***

God will not come up short in the promise He made to Himself. He will have a people who will enter into His promised rest.

There is a foreshadowing of that in many souls today. These are those who find themselves faced with all kinds of adversity, yet have an uncanny serenity about them. These are those who no longer struggle with those sins that so easily beset them. These are those who can say in all honesty and in all conviction, that they are no longer sinners, but that they are the righteousness of God in Christ. These are those who can look martyrdom in the face and sing, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

Does this mean that we may no longer have moments of temptations, discouragements, and defeats? Of course not! But these things do not define us. These things do not control us. We do not confess that the old man of flesh and sin is who we still are because that is not who Jesus says we are. We are in Him and He is in us. We are seated with Him in heavenly places. We are to the praise of His glory. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus. Where, in all of this, does it say we are to continue to confess that we are still "sinners"? As long as we confess that we are still sinners, we deny the blood atonement of our Lord. We are disobedient. Consequently, we live our "Christian" lives, suffering one defeat after another. That is not the overcoming life God intended for us.

### ***God is truth***

Do you know what God hates more than anything? To be called a liar. "God is not a man, that He should lie." Num. 23:19. Yet, that is what we do when we fail to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that He is our Savior, redeemer, justifier, righteousness, deliverer, sanctifier, and glorifier; that He is our health and our healing, our physician, provider, and protector; that He is our all in all—our sufficiency in all things.

Nothing pleases God more than for us to have faith in Him—to believe Him, believe in Him, trust Him, and take Him at His word.

We put our trust in Him and not in our own dead works. Now that is good news. He did for us what we could never do for ourselves. It is bad news indeed if we think that we can lift one finger to save

ourselves, to make ourselves righteous or holy. That kind of righteousness is as filthy rags. God has no use for it and neither should we.

May we repent of our unbelief. Turn to the only One in all creation who can save us from our sin, who can deliver us from the hand of Satan, who can lift us out of the pit of hell and death, who can heal our diseases, who can provide for us, who can protect us, who can keep us, and be our God in every way.

Yes, the promise is for now. The illustration of the acorn shows us that we are already possessors of this rest. We enter into it by faith. Yet, there is a fullness of this rest that has been promised to us. The down payment has already been paid.

We anticipate the full unfolding of this rest at His coming. At that time, we who have put our trust in Him will enjoy the fullness of His presence and being and will have entered fully, perfectly into His glorious rest.

“When the Son of man comes, shall He find the faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8. I believe He will. He has promised it to Himself. He will have a company of people who have “entered into His Sabbath rest.” They will be brought to glory. They will bring Him glory.

## **CHAPTER 16 - GLORY: THE ESSENCE OF GOD**

is one of those words we seem to know when and how to use, but when asked what it is, we lift our hands and mutter, “It’s uh...uh...you know, it’s....” We cannot find precise words to define it, especially when it comes to God, and because it speaks of God, it is beyond human grasp. Yet, we try. At best, we can describe His glory from our human point of view. Here goes:

*The glory of God is the essence (substance, sum-total) of God in all of His splendor, majesty, dignity, infinite beauty, greatness, and magnificence—such attributes that give rise to spontaneous praise, worship, thanksgiving, honor, joy, and a sense of awe.*

To experience the glory of God is to experience His fullness, oneness, completeness, and perfection.

### ***Glory in the Old Testament***

The glory of God appeared to the children of Israel on numerous occasions. It appeared in the cloud, Exod. 16:10; upon Mount Sinai, Exod. 24:16; and like a devouring fire, Exod. 24:17.

Moses asked to see the LORD’S glory as told in Exodus 33:18, 22.

The glory of the LORD so filled the Tabernacle that Moses was unable to enter. Exod. 40:34-35.

After the completion of the Temple by Solomon, it was so filled with the glory of the LORD that the priests could not stand to minister. 1 Kings 8:11.

David gave instructions to Asaph and his brethren to “glory in His holy name” and to “declare His glory among the heathen...because glory and honor are in His presence.” 1 Chron. 16:10, 24.

Even the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork. Ps. 19:1.

The LORD strong and mighty is the King of glory. Ps. 24:7-10.

### ***Jesus is the glory of the Father***

God Almighty, through the power of the Holy Spirit, brought forth His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who is “the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person....” Heb. 1:3. John’s gospel witnessed that He was the Word made flesh, “and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14.

### ***Jesus glorified the Father***

The glory of the Father was in Jesus. He glorified the Father in all that He was, said, and did. That is to say, He expressed the *essence (substance, sum-total) of God in all of His splendor, majesty, dignity, infinite beauty, greatness, and magnificence*. Paul affirmed, “For it pleased the Father that in Him [Jesus] should all fullness dwell.” Col. 1:19.

In His priestly prayer, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and prayed, “Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You: As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me with Your own self with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” John 17:1-5.

## ***Jesus glorifies His followers***

Jesus then declared to the Father, "The glory which You gave Me I have given to them [His disciples] that they may be one, even as We are one." John 17:22. We have been given the same glory as was given to Jesus.

It is through our union with Christ that we will be made perfect. It is through our union with Christ that the world will know the Father sent Jesus.

We are sanctified (set apart) and sent into the world to show forth the glory of the Father in our union with Christ. The apostle Paul declared that we are to the praise of the glory of His grace." Eph. 1:6.

Ultimately Jesus desires that those whom the Father gave Him would be with Him where He was that they may behold His glory. John 17:22-24.

The glory of God is in us because He is in us. We want to glorify the Son and the Father in all that we are, say, and do. That is to say, we want to express the *essence (substance, sum-total) of God in all of His splendor, majesty, dignity, infinite beauty, greatness, and magnificence.*

We as believers have been born of the same God-life that Jesus had; therefore, we have His glory. "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." Rom. 8:29. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." 1 Cor. 15:49.

## ***Face to face***

We, too, will show forth His glory. It is the glory of the Father in us.

Paul wrote the Corinthians in regard to prophecy and tongues saying, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Cor. 13:9-12.

The word "glass" literally means "mirror." I always thought of that as a glass that we could vaguely see through. I assumed that the day would come when the glass would clear up and we could see through it perfectly. Then it struck me that if this is a mirror and we hold the mirror up to our faces to look into the mirror, we are seeing our own faces. As believers, however vaguely, we are to see the glory of the Lord in our faces. But for now that glory is only "in part." We can only see it dimly.

We understand that He is already in us in fullness, but because we have a hard time seeing that, we have a hard time believing it. When we do not believe it, we have a hard time living as though it were true. In the day we do see it and believe it, we will know without any question that we are in the face of glory. Moreover, the face of His glory will be in us. He is living in us and shining forth through us.

Still instructing the Corinthian believers, Paul wrote, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:18.

Ephesians 1:12 declares, "That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ." He didn't say one day we will be to the praise of His glory. So far as He is concerned, it is a present day reality. God declares something about us that we do not seem to know about ourselves. But because He said so, we choose to believe it. Jesus is certainly to the praise of His glory. If we are in Jesus and Jesus is in us, then we too are certainly to the praise of His glory.

The day is coming when that mirror will suddenly clear up for us and we will see ourselves as we are seen by Him. We will see the fullness of the glory of God that is within us. God already sees us that way.

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Rom. 8:18. It does not say, “revealed *to* us,” but “revealed *in* us.” The glory that is already in us will be made visible to us.

We are never to seek the glory for ourselves. We seek only to glorify God, the Father, through His Son, Jesus Christ. If we desire at all to be glorified, it is because we want God to have what He wants. He wants and will have many sons brought to glory. But it is His job to glorify us. It is not our job to glorify ourselves or one another. “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.” 1 Cor. 1:31. “Therefore let no man glory in men.” 1 Cor. 3:21.

### ***Many sons brought to glory***

It pleases the Father to have many sons brought to glory in fullness. “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Heb. 2:10.

When Moses came down off of the mountain, having been in the presence of God, his face shone with the glory of LORD. The glory on His face was a validation that he had been in the presence of the Almighty. It was a testimony to the people that he had been with God.

The glory was *upon* the face of Moses, but will be from *within* the many sons brought to glory. The glory faded from Moses’ face, but the glory within Father’s glorified sons will never fade. The glory was on Moses’ face only. The glory from within the revealed sons of God will cover them head to foot, revealing who they have become.

### ***The latter temple***

The glory of the Lord filled Moses’ tabernacle in the wilderness. It filled Solomon’s temple when it was completed. It did not appear when Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple after the Babylonian exile.

Yet, there is a promise that it will fill the latter day temple and the glory of it will be greater than before. Hag. 2:1-9.

Paul makes it clear that we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit—that latter day building which the glory of the Lord will fill and which will never fade. The writer of Hebrews explains, “But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation....” Heb. 9:11 (NASB).

### ***Jesus is our hope of glory***

The glory is all in Jesus. It is all about Jesus. The glory is all about bringing Him and the Father the spontaneous *praise, worship, thanksgiving, honor, joy, and awe* that they deserve. Christ in us is our hope of having this glory. Col. 1:27. Therefore, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Rom. 5:1-2.

The illustration of the acorn shows us that the glory has come, is coming, and will come in fullness. A peculiar people of God are coming forth at the end of this age through whom the perfect glory of God will shine.

Arise, shine, for His light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us. "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you." Isa. 60:1-2.

Arise, shine, for His light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us. "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you." Isa. 60:1-2.

## CHAPTER 17 - PERFECTED IN LOVE

Once seen, it becomes clear that all things of the Kingdom of God are summed up into this one word: love. Nevertheless, it is not just any kind of love. It is the God-kind of love. The God-kind of love is perfect love. 1 John 4:18 reads, "There is no fear in love; but *perfect love* casts out fear." We are destined to be a living expression of that perfect love, such love as is being perfected in us. The New Testament noun for this love is *agape* (ä'gä,pay). The verb form is *agapeo*.

### **Different kinds of love**

*Agape* is different from the other kinds of love we express in the English language. We use the one English word "love" for a wide range of experiences and feelings. We say: "I love you." "I love my cat." "Let's make love." "Don't you just love that chocolate cake!" The Greek language has four words for the one English word love. They are *agape*, *philos*, *storge*, and *eros*. Of the four words, *philos* and *agape* are the only two used in the New Testament and, therefore, the only two that pertain to this writing.

*Philos* (noun) and *phileo* (verb) in Modern Greek means "friendship." It includes loyalty to friends, family, and community, and requires virtue, equality and familiarity. It is the Greek for affection and is strongly associated with emotions. *Philanthropic* comes from two compounded Greek words, *philos* and *anthropos* meaning, "love of man." *Philadelphia* also comes from two compounded Greek words: *philos* and *adelphos*, when combined translates "brotherly love."

*Philos* (affectionate love) has self-gratification as its reward. It brings pleasure to the one expressing the love. We love expecting to be loved. Or we love to enjoy the pleasure of loving. If *philos* ceases to satisfy, we feel like we do not love that person or thing anymore. *Philos* can be fickle.

*Philos* has its place in the body of Christ, but it is not the same as *agape*. (The root word for *philos/ phileo* is found in Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 16:22; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; Titus 2:4; 3:4, and 15.)

*Agape* (noun) and *agapeo* (verb) in Modern Greek means "love." We shall see, however, that the New Testament attributes a much deeper significance to it. *Agape* is translated "charity" in the King James Version of the Bible.

In our day, the English word *charity* primarily has to do with the benevolent giving of money and, as such, is an insufficient modern translation of *agape*. Paul clearly shows that *agape* is something other than giving to the poor. In 1 Corinthians 13:3 he wrote, "And though I feed the poor with all my goods, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love [*agape*], it profits me nothing."

*Agape* may give to the poor, but the mere act of giving to the poor is not *agape*. Human compassion (*philos*) is good to have, but it is not the same as *agape*. Human compassion comes out of who we are. *Agape* comes out of who God is in us. God is love (*agape*). 1 John 4:8. Human compassion may cost us time and money, but *agape* may cost us our lives. It is what results when one is dead to self, when we realize we now belong to Jesus.

### **Unconditional love**

*Agape* has generally been defined as "unconditional love." Conditional love bargains. It says, "I will love you if you will...." Unconditional love never bargains. Jesus told His followers in Matthew 5:46, "For if you love [*agape*] them who love [*agape*] you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans [tax gatherers] do the same?" He never put a condition on His love for people. He just exercised *agape* toward people.

To be sure, “unconditional love” is a good definition for *agape* as far as it goes, but it does not fully define it. The English word love has been so weakened by the world’s use of it that a stronger definition is demanded to explain this God-kind of love.

### ***Agape defined by Jesus’ life***

The original Greek idea expressed in the word *agape* is unknown before the New Testament. However, it is given particular meaning by its use in the New Testament. Jesus with His own life and in selflessly dying for us gave unmistakable meaning to *agape*. “But God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Rom. 5:8. Jesus Himself said, “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13. We cannot miss this aspect of Jesus’ sacrifice of His own life, that He would love us that much, and that the Father would love us that much. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” John 3:16.

*Agape, then, in its truest sense has to do with sacrificial living. It can be understood as the unconditional, sacrificial surrender of self—the giving up of something of self that is in the best interests of another person, even unto death.*

One dictionary defined *agape* as “selfless love.” I would broaden even that to say, “selfless living.”

For the sake of emphasis hereafter this definition of “unconditional, sacrificial love” will be used in place of “love” or *agape*.

### ***Agape is action***

Unconditional, sacrificial love is an action, a decision, a choice to act without regard to self. It does not have to have a feeling to act. It may even at times require action that runs contrary to feelings.

Yet, feelings may legitimately accompany unconditional, sacrificial love. Peter incorporates both *phileo* and *agape*. It reads, “Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto sincere *love of the brethren [philos]*, see that you *love [agape]* one another with a pure heart fervently.” 1 Peter 1:22. Interpreted, this could read, “Now that you have affection toward one another see to it that you are willing to lay down your lives for one another. Put substance to your feelings.” I firmly believe that God has profound affection and compassion (*philos*) toward us as well.

Unconditional, sacrificial love often means that we have to set boundaries. Laying down our lives for what is in the best interests of another does not make us doormats. That is why I add to my expanded definition of *agape*, “that is in the best interests of another.” We are not necessarily to do whatever another person demands of us. We are to obey the Holy Spirit who determines what is in the other person’s best interests and we do that. Some unconditional, sacrificial love actions fall into the category of tough love, doing what is right regardless of what another thinks, asks, or demands.

### ***Agape is commanded in scripture***

Jesus gave us two commandments. He said, “You shall unconditionally, sacrificially love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, You shall unconditionally, sacrificially love your neighbor as yourself.” He continued to assert that all the laws and the prophets hang on these two commandments. Matt. 22:37-40.

Jesus proclaimed that if we unconditionally, sacrificially love Him, we will show it by keeping His commandments. John 14:15. John 15:9-13 reads, “As the Father has unconditionally, sacrificially loved Me, so have I unconditionally, sacrificially loved you: continue in My unconditional, sacrificial love. If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My unconditional, sacrificial love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His unconditional, sacrificial love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is My commandment, That you unconditionally, sacrificially love one another, as I have unconditionally, sacrificially loved you. Greater unconditional, sacrificial love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Jesus reinforced this in John 13:34 saying, “A new commandment I give unto you, that you unconditionally, sacrificially love one another as I have unconditionally, sacrificially loved you....”

James wrote, “If you fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, ‘You shall unconditionally, sacrificially love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well.” James 2:8.

Husbands are commanded to unconditionally, sacrificially love their wives according to Ephesians 5:25, 28 and Colossians 3:19. Young women are instructed to show affectionate love to their husbands and their children according to Titus 2:4.

We are to consider one another to provoke unto unconditional, sacrificial love and good works. Heb. 10:24.

Moreover, we are even to have unconditional, sacrificial love for our enemies, bless those who curse us, do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who spitefully use and persecute us. Matt. 5:44. God is love, not hate. Those who hate us may want to murder us, but we remain willing to lay down our lives for what is in their best interest.

### ***Agape is the fruit of the Spirit***

Unconditional, sacrificial love is the first fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23. “The fruit of the Spirit is unconditional, sacrificial love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith [faithfulness], meekness, and temperance [self-control]: against such there is no law.”

It is the fruit from which comes all the other fruit of the Spirit. Without unconditional, sacrificial love there can be no joy, no peace, no longsuffering (patience), no gentleness, no goodness, no faith, no meekness, or no temperance.

This fruit of the Spirit cannot be legislated. It is simply in us to produce this fruit just as it is in a fig tree to produce figs. The fruit of the Spirit is who we have become, who we are in Christ. When we come into the fullness of His unconditional, sacrificial love, we will also come into the fullness of joy, peace, longsuffering—all of the fruit of the Spirit.

### ***The witness of agape***

Jesus said that unconditional, sacrificial love for one another is the way other men will know that we are His disciples. John 13:35. John explained, “Beloved, let us unconditionally, sacrificially love one another: for unconditional, sacrificial love is of God; and everyone who unconditionally, sacrificially loves is born of God, and knows God. He who does not unconditionally, sacrificially love does not know God, for God is unconditional, sacrificial love. In this was manifested the unconditional, sacrificial love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is unconditional, sacrificial love, not that we unconditionally, sacrificially love God, but that He unconditionally, sacrificially loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation [the making of peace with God] for our sins. Beloved, if God so unconditionally, sacrificially loved us, we ought also to unconditionally, sacrificially love one another. No man has seen God at any time. If we unconditionally,

sacrificially love one another, God dwells in us and His unconditional, sacrificial love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.” 1 John 4:7-13.

Unconditional, sacrificial love is not only the evidence that we are His disciples, but it is also what draws others to want to come to Jesus. Unconditional, sacrificial love is the most powerful witness of the gospel. People need unconditional, sacrificial love. They are drawn to the love of Jesus in us and to the things that make for life. They are drawn to spirit and truth. Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” He was speaking of His death on the cross. John 12:32-33. His death on the cross was God’s ultimate display of unconditional, sacrificial love. The world must see it displayed in us who believe.

### ***Perfect agape***

“Perfect love casts out fear.” 1 John 4:18.

What is perfect unconditional, sacrificial love? The Greek word for “perfect” that is used here signifies that which has reached its end: finished, complete, perfect, fully-grown, and mature. Biblical perfection speaks of the fullness we are promised in scripture. Perfect unconditional, sacrificial love, therefore, is full-grown agape.

Paul refines our definition of this perfect unconditional, sacrificial love in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. He writes:

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not unconditional, sacrificial love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not unconditional, sacrificial love, I am nothing.

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not unconditional, sacrificial love, it profits me nothing.

“Unconditional, sacrificial love suffers long, and is kind.

“Unconditional, sacrificial love envies not.

“Unconditional, sacrificial love vaunts not itself and is not puffed up,  
does not behave itself unseemly,  
seeks not her own,  
is not easily provoked,  
thinks no evil,  
rejoices not in iniquity,  
but rejoices in the truth,  
bears all things,  
believes all things,  
hopes all things,  
endures all things.

“Unconditional, sacrificial love never fails: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away....

“And now abides faith, hope, and unconditional, sacrificial love, these three; but the greatest of these is unconditional, sacrificial love.”

Paul adds in Romans 13:10, “Unconditional, sacrificial love does not work ill to one’s neighbor.” If we are working any wrongdoing toward our neighbor, we are not practicing unconditional, sacrificial love.

He also tells us to forbear one another in unconditional, sacrificial love. Eph. 4:2.

We are to “owe no man anything, but to unconditionally, sacrificially love one another: for he who unconditionally, sacrificially loves another has fulfilled the law.” Rom. 13:8.

How many marriages would be radically healed if husbands really unconditionally, sacrificially loved their wives as Christ unconditionally, sacrificially loved His bride? How many families would hold together if each member were willing to unconditionally, sacrificially love one another? How many neighbor relations would be restored? How many nations would be able to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks? Isa. 2:4.

The world would be a totally different place. The good news is that the world *will* be a totally different place when unconditional, sacrificial love is ultimately perfected in His people. “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Isa. 2:4.

Unconditional, sacrificial love must stand in the place where self-importance once stood. John the Baptist declared, “He might increase, but I must decrease.” John 3:30. The “increase” of Jesus must precede the “decrease” of us. If the increase is dependent upon our decreasing, then the focus is shifted from Jesus to us trying to get low enough.

As the Lord Jesus is increased in us, so will His love because He is love.

### ***The nature of God in us***

Unconditional, sacrificial love is God’s nature and not just something He demonstrates when He feels like it. Unconditional, sacrificial love flows out of who He is. This love must be *expressed*, and the expression of unconditional, sacrificial love is to give of one’s self without any thought of getting anything in return. It must be *received* before it can find satisfaction; and the expression of it must be *returned* before it can find fulfillment. God’s unconditional, sacrificial love has mankind as its intended target.

Once we receive God’s life through His Son, Jesus Christ, we take on God’s nature. As He is unconditional, sacrificial love, so are we. It is not just what we do. It flows out of who we have become (or who we are becoming). Once we become unconditional, sacrificial love we are bound by its very nature to express it.

Our first natural response is to unconditionally, sacrificially love God as He has unconditionally, sacrificially loved us. Our second natural response is to unconditionally, sacrificially love others. Why? Because we have become unconditional, sacrificial love! It is the nature and character of who we now are. 1 John 4:20 reasons, “If a man says, ‘I love God’ and hates his brother, he is a liar.” Unconditional, sacrificial love is not selective. If that which you think you have that you call love is manifested toward one and not to all, it is not unconditional, sacrificial love. The preferential love we feel for family and others is different and legitimate, but it is not unconditional, sacrificial love.

Perhaps unconditional, sacrificial love has yet to be perfected in us; nevertheless, this principle stands: If we unconditionally, sacrificially love God because we have become this kind of love by receiving Him, we become unconditionally, sacrificially loving persons. But you might honestly say, “I love God and I know I don’t love certain other people, as I know I should.” I ask, “Do you want to love them? Is it in

your heart to love them?” God looks upon the heart. The Holy Spirit is He who forms Christ in us. Therefore, we are looking to the finished work of God in Christ in us, praying for Him to perfect His unconditional, sacrificial love in us and through us, thus advancing the Kingdom of God in the world.

### ***Agape being perfected in us***

This unconditional, sacrificial love is being perfected in us. It has to be. God has promised it to Himself. Jesus told His followers, “Be therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.” Matt. 5:48. This verse is in the context of unconditional, sacrificial love. Perfection in Jesus has everything to do with unconditional, sacrificial love and it seems to be achievable in this lifetime. Why else would He command it?

Perfect unconditional, sacrificial love is clearly made known throughout the New Testament. When the perfect comes, we will all be like Jesus. When we see Jesus we will be the embodiment of unconditional, sacrificial love. We will see, experience, and become the very unconditional, sacrificial love of God Himself. His unconditional, sacrificial love will have been made perfect, mature, complete, full within us. All that is righteous and good and kind and mysterious and powerful and gracious and awesome will culminate in perfect unconditional, sacrificial love. When we get to the place where we can unconditionally, sacrificially love as Jesus unconditionally, sacrificially loved—and we will—unconditional, sacrificial love will have been perfected in us.

Jesus is, of course, the fullness of unconditional, sacrificial love being perfected in us. It is in Him that we will come into this fullness of who He is. The illustration of the acorn shows us that perfect love has come, is coming, and will come in fullness.

### ***The sum of the matter***

“Now the end of the commandment is unconditional, sacrificial love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of sincere faith.” 1 Tim. 1:5.

In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul says that the ascended Lord Jesus Christ gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. He gave them to perfect the saints to do the work of service for the building up of the body in Christ.

These ministries are given until we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

When we come into the fullness of Christ, we will no longer be children...but speaking the truth in unconditional, sacrificial love, we may grow up into Christ in all things, who is the head.

This still is not the sum of the matter. Paul continued to write that it is from this place of maturity that the whole body is fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the *building up of itself in unconditional, sacrificial love*.

This entire passage funnels into that final word—unconditional, sacrificial love; thus making this God kind of love the summation of where God is bringing us.

This love for God and for one another is how we will ultimately live our lives *out* from *within* the Kingdom of God. Through this love King Jesus will bring forth His Kingdom and His will on earth as it is in heaven.

## **CHAPTER 18 - THE TREE OF LIFE WITHIN**

The Kingdom of God is a tree  
The Tree of Life inside of you  
The seed of which is Jesus  
Planted when you first believed  
And put your trust in Him.  
That seed fell on good ground  
And has been kept watered by the word of God  
And nurtured by the Holy Spirit of God.  
It has grown and spread within you  
Overtaking more and more of your life  
Conforming you into the very image  
Of that Tree within.  
And from its branches  
Springs forth much fruit  
First thirty-fold  
Then sixty-fold  
And now very soon  
As it comes into full maturity  
A hundred-fold.  
It is good for eating  
And even its leaves  
Are for the healing of the nations.  
This Tree within you  
Is planted by a river  
The River of Life that flows within you.

And now as this present age draws to a close  
That Tree is beginning  
to break forth from within you  
To be food for many who come  
And eat the fruit—the seed—thereof.  
The many sons of God  
Are being brought to glory  
The glory of the Father.  
Can you feel it?  
It feels like any moment  
That you are going to burst open  
To give that glorious Tree space  
To grow well beyond who you have ever been  
Or had ever hoped to be.  
Rejoice! For your redemption is near.

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him:

“And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.” Rev. 22:1-5.

## **CONCLUSION**

I pray that the message of this book helps us to see what the Kingdom of God is as compared to all that is in the world;

That it opens a vision and ignites a desire to live according to the Kingdom of God and no longer according to the world; and

That it creates an expectation in us that was not there before, an anticipation of the coming fullness of the Kingdom of God on the earth as it is in heaven.

Most of all, that it serves to call forth the Kingdom of God within the hearts and lives of true Kingdom Seekers. May it be so!

“Surely I come quickly.  
Amen.  
Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”  
Rev. 22:20.

Your Bride is waiting.